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National Monthly Magazine of the Performing Arts

MARCH 1982

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australia

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A National Drama?

This is the month of the Adelaide Festival. One of its major offerings is Patrick White's *Agony Drive*, which, through a quartet of characters and a central relationship, examines the course of twentieth century Australian history and the post-war advance of the metropolitan city.

Patrick White's fortunes as a playwright are an indictment of our treatment of writers for the stage in this country. His plays are complex, poetic, serious, a canon which anywhere else would ensure a place in the national body of plays that are continually produced. Shawman's revivals of *The Stream at Scarsdale* and *A Chair in the Sun* proved that, given the chance, the public would respond.

The MTC has proven, many many times over, the same thing with *Ray Lawler* and *The Doll Trilogy*, and is about to put on Lawler's latest, *Golden*, but it is there generally, no wonder, both the commitment to our heritage and a coherent approach to create which builds a sense in the public mind of a national drama, in the way it existed, because of sheer tidal force of the new wave, in the '30s.

Richard Whorrett did have as part of his platform for the STC the establishment of a policy of producing one outstanding play from the past each season — accordingly the company began with *The Secret Storm* in the new year of 1980. Since then, though outstanding plays are being mounted (and will be again with *A Mopie and Holy Communion*), no more has been heard of the initiative to "establish a repertoire of Australian classics", an initiative T4 hailed at the time as "as conspicuous to it as a neon sign".

Even the '40-'50s of local and overseas writing seems similarly to have gone by the board. It is the new left-rightism — or is it that for the most part indigenous work is seen in the same light as experimental work and must be consigned to second venues, and the STC's *White Pages* has been delayed?

The STC example is indicative of a wider problem, that the "core canon" Jack Hibbard noticed in 1979 has become a depressing depression. Certainly the burgeoning of writing in the early seventies was fuelled by, and reflected, a social and political upheaval of a spirited, optimistic kind. Its confidence was not put in itself, but in being a part of an effective movement of change like ending of the Vietnam war, for instance. Common causes make for unity.

Now the '30s revolution has been absorbed into the mainstream — Rosemary's

The Plowboy World is to be presented by the MTC (which reminds me of a Jan Hawkey article which asserted "They were the apostles, and now they're messing with our fucking plots") — there is nothing to trust and write against.

Whorrett have named their gaze to the outside world. Louis Nowra's *June Fire*, *Phantom* and *The Previous Woman*, Hibbard's *The Unravelled*, Einfeld's *Enigma* and Sewall's *Travels and Wishes*. *The Bright World*. Sewall is preaching, at Katherine Brisbane and in a discussion of this point, to an often Marxist audience that they ought to ease, for the credibility gap between the world of the play and that of the audience is enormous. Perhaps the inhumanity of modernism has pushed people back into apathy.

The other possibility seems at the moment to be nostalgia, classic and epic drama (since Hewitt has finally come into his own). Perhaps it is that the issues facing the world, economic crises and the looming holocaust, are finally too big and secondly, are susceptible to dramatic expression. Whatever the reasons, our playwrights do not seem to have their finger on the pulse of what is happening. They do not seem capable of defining where we are — in the way only Williamson and Hibbard and O'Malley did in their time, with the latter looking into the modernist/musical/postmodern while it was about it. David Hare talks in this issue of how what British playwrights have to say about the current state of their country and the world at large (and they have a lot to say) is eagerly learned to and rejected by the general public.

The problem is not, though, to be laid solely at the door of the theatre. But if our sense of a national drama is not to keep fading, we declare, then we must control ourselves not just to Australian content, but to it as a primary sense. English and American companies would not even consider any other than a first and foremost approach to their national drama (here we recently applied even 90-'94). They also keep their heritage alive, not in a museum sense, but continually reinterpreting it in today.

Australian literature needs to establish the content heritage given, significantly, in 1981 an application for agents to mount a season of modern Australian classics was rejected. Without this sense of continuity we will keep going the rough waters and roughs with our drama and never see it as an ocean.



Peter Carroll

PETER CARROLL BACK AT NIMROD

Peter Carroll will be returning to Nimrod, having finished his 18 month stint as *Perth* and toured as *Chanchalla* for the STC, to play "poor little Scamson" in their first play of the new season, *The Jewels*. He follows in the footsteps of Derek Jacobs on Broadway and Graeme Blundell in Melbourne, though he himself hasn't seen the play performed. This will be the first time he has been directed by close friend Aubrey Melior and worked on stage with Angela French-McGeoghan, though he both worked with Aubrey and taught Angela in NIDA.

Carroll will also be acting in two more plays at Nimrod over the next 12 months or so, and four over the next two years with the Sydney Theatre Company, though what they all are hasn't yet been decided. This year he will play Malcolm in STC's *Macbeth* and the lead in the new David

Williamson play, *The Perfectionists*. These new, flexible contracts for top players who are not paid if the permanent company are obviously of great benefit to company, actor and audience alike. For the actor they give a degree of security without tying themselves completely, and for audiences it gives a chance to see the range of top actors' work without having to see the same faces in every production.

The Jewels was written in the late '20s, a play with tragic subject matter gives factual verisimilitude to exhibit the madness of a society in which "only the dead say what the living may think". It was once rehearsed with Meyerhold, but was banned before the opening night and author Nikolai Erdman never wrote another play.

Carroll had a hard decision to make in that he was asked to go to Perth to act in Dorothy Hewett's *The Fields of Man* at the same time, but decided that "this was the nearest I'd ever get to playing Hamlet" so accepted Nimrod's offer.

PASCOE SHUFFLES THE PACK

As part of his "new broom" maneuvers to upgrade the workings of the Australia Council, Dr Timothy Pascoe has re-organized its entire internal structure. At the time of writing the whole top layer of the management staff had been spilled. It sounds drastic, but in fact it is more a question of rebuilding than throwing the pack in the air and crying "off with their heads!" they are to apply for five newly created positions that are being advertised only within the Council.

The reorganization is fairly radical, with the five current Boards — Aboriginal Arts, Community Arts, Crafts, Literature, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts — and their separate staffs to be abolished. Instead, the Chairman (Pascoe) and the Council (of the Council) will set above five new departments (the directorships of which are the five advertised positions): Council Secretariat, Policy and Planning, Arts Co-ordination, Client Services, and Finance and Administration.

Finance and Admin, the Secretariat, and Policy and Planning will contain the obvious, plus in the latter the information, publications, library, research and contact with the Federal Government and state funding bodies. Under Arts Co-ordination come all the old Boards, each will have one employed Director with the current system of rotating unpaid members drawn from the professions. As present Board Directors will not change, that will happen as contracts end or people leave — the Music Board will be the first as the Directorship has just fallen vacant and will soon be publicly advertised. Eventually each Director is to be semi-pensioned or to prove expert in the field, and will be concerned not with the deployment of staff under him, but with the art form itself, its practitioners and requirements.

The current staff of the Boards will be moved to the department of Client Services, where they will be dealing with Artists and Organisation Services — so with the organs means and individuals seeking funding — with Projects and Innovation and with Application Registration. Aboriginal Services will have a separate section in this department because of the cultural differences. Apart from a few well-qualified people, staff will not deal with specialised areas as they did under the previous Board system, so grant applicants will very likely find themselves dealing with a different project officer(s) than previously.

The major reason for this restructuring is to promote efficiency and maximum output with the falling number of Australia Council staff. The present organisation was

designed for a staff of some 250, there are at present only about half that number and outsiders certainly don't allow for increases.

Dr Pearce wants the primary aim of the Council to be the getting of government money for the arts and the presentation of the means involved to the public. Its other main aim is to service the arts and its organisations effectively, in terms of their needs, but is critical of the conservative way in which money has previously been allocated between the Boards, and thinks that the new structure will allow greater flexibility. At the same time, Pearce says, the role of the Australia Council is to respond to needs, not to force institutions (could he be referring to the Limited Life ones?), though he defends the Challenge Grant scheme as the latest deployment of the reduced funding.

For further news of who will be doing what in the new-look Australia Council, watch this space.

FUNDING RESTORED

With the Federal Government's about-face on funding cuts to the Australia Council, the Theatre Board has been able to restore grants to some of the companies who were originally to lose all funding this year. The Hole in the Wall gets \$50,000, the Ensemble, \$37,000, La Boite, \$18,000 (on top of the \$12,000 already given for their Early Childhood Drama Project), and the SA Stage Company, \$22,500. The From Factory did not re-submit an application and one Victorian company, Why Not Theatre and Theatreworks, were rejected completely again.

Even the extra money from Government did not allow the Theatre Board to restore full, inflation-linked funding to everyone, although the money held back in the Challenge Grant scheme has been automatically released with a further amount available on Challenge.

SHELL FOR PLAYBOX

The Playbox have been quick to get underway in the search for private sector funding. They have succeeded in getting the Shell Company of Australia to underwrite their Upstairs program to the tune of 400,000 this year. Shell's sponsorship is the largest single private corporate support. Playbox has even received and they will of course be able to claim \$1 for \$3 on the Australia Council's Challenge Grant scheme.

There was a small hand-out ceremony on the opening night of *Lonely Lonely Lovers* by Barry Dickson on February 10.

MTC SEASON

The Melbourne Theatre Company has announced its first season for '82 and will be



New play from Ray Lawler

ending off with Shakespeare at the end of the month. Sandy Goss will be playing Rosalind in *As You Like It* at the Athenaeum. At Russell Street Forde's Parlow will star in John Bennett's brilliant play about Australian acrophobia, *The Floating World*, among that the year this piece makes it into establishment theatre, the place where it was premiered eight years ago (the APG) has finally sunk beneath the waves. A new Ray Lawler play entitled *Gebyred* will be performing at the Athenaeum on July 20.

LIGHTS ON UPSTAGE

March 11 will see lights up at Sydney's newest theatre venue.

Geraldine Turner and John O'May will open in *Henry VIII* at Ken and Lillian Horler's Upstage theatre restaurant. It's at 652 George Street, right in the heart of movie land.

Ken Horler



Upstage is to be a cabaret venue and it's already located and set up to house the solution to what the Horlers propose to be the last big gap in Sydney's entertainment spectrum — an intimate, elegant space where one's wish to eat and drink well can be accommodated in the same place and on the same night as one's appetite for lively, stimulating entertainment. The Horlers should know, they put their money and their energies where they counted were to set up *Norwood* in 1970.

Henry VIII is directed by Ken Horler. Marc Lambert is Musical Director, Larry Richardson set designer and Wendy Dickson will do the costumes. Expect to see *Gebyrd* side by side with *Sendheim*, Clive Jones coming it with Cole Porter and Noel Coward, to name but a few.

STC VERSATILITY

The Sydney Theatre Company's *Chicago* goes on and on! It has to end its capacity season at the Theatre Royal on March 27 to make way for the STC's production of *Amadeus*. The Company has booked the commercial venue for a total of five months in '82 to supplement its reduced subsidy income.

It has also appeared Ralph Kerly, lately of the Flying Troupe in Melbourne, as Associate Director, his responsibilities will be to assist Donald McDonald on the administrative side and Richard Wherrett on the artistic. Clearly a versatile gentleman. He will also be in charge of developing second venue activities prior to the opening of STC's Walsh Bay headquarters.

The Artistic Director will also be showing his versatility when he depicts Brecht's *Makropulos* for the Australian Opera in June.

The versatile Ralph Kerly



FLUX AT THE NATIONAL

The National, Perth, seems to be in a state of flux since the departure of Stephen Barry in the beginning of the year. Assistant directors Rodney Parker and Ralph Mayville will be working on productions and Mayville will be interim company director until the end of the March when we can expect a more permanent appointment to be made. John Townsend, the National's Administrator, who left recently and hasn't yet been replaced, as Production Manager, Duncan Ord is taking responsibility for much of his work. Publicity Officer, Lynn Schwan resigned at the end of the year and has been replaced by the Don Frank Lampson. We await further developments.



Ralph Mayville — holds the fort at the National

THE Q IN 82

1982 looks like being an expensive year for Perth's Q Theatre, construction of its new 300-seat theatre is underway, with completion date estimated for July. In the meantime the company's sixth season has been announced and includes Oso's, *It Was The Heat Sin*, Williamson's *The Clock*, *I Am*, *I Am* and premieres of two new Australian plays — *Safety in Numbers* by Philip Scott and Luke Hardy and *Heir Due* by Martin Sharman.

Heir Due had a reading at the Q last August and *Safety in Numbers* is a four-hander with songs. Philip Scott is well known in Sydney for his musical direction and last worked for the Q in *Produce or Placode*. He's currently working with the *Rocky Horror Show*.



Philip Scott, writer and composer of *Safety in Numbers*.

A FIRST FOR SYDNEY

Griffin theatre at the Stables, following the current production of Ron Blair's *Hare*, is presenting what is believed to be a first for Sydney, an evenings theatre, presented by the author. *Silam — Debenen and other forms of Self-Destruction* is a program of three one-act plays by Mel Perrin, directed by Mel Perrin.

The three plays, as the title might suggest, deal with the ways and mechanisms by which individuals are manipulated, and manipulate themselves into socially criminal situations. Billed as "an evening of light tragedy", the plays are *Medusa*, an observation on that drive in all of us to live up to the sometimes absurd expectations of others, *The Rape of Lucrece* McColl, which looks at the way the socially disadvantaged are kept that way by the plastic images of the media, and *Not For a Hardone* a parable of man's need to find a meaning outside himself.

If past experience of Perrin plays is anything to go by, this Griffin venture too "social absurdism" should be, at one provoking, at least outrageous.

Mel Perrin



TOMMY STEELE

Tommy Steele is back in the country, currently performing *The Tommy Steel Show* at Her Majesty's, Melbourne, and moving in April to the Capitol in Sydney. Apart from the soft pop music and variety shows he is best known for, Steele has also acted with the Old Vic as Tony Lumpkin in *The School for Scandal*, and for Michael Codron in Goldstein's *The Servant of Two Masters*. On TV he has played Freya with Alec Guinness and Ralph Richardson in *Fourth Night* and wrote an unusual script in prose and verse for a program of an autobiographical journey through his early childhood in London, which remains a classic. Steele is also an enthusiastic amateur painter and sculptor.



Tommy Steele

LA BOITE BECOMING PROFESSIONAL

A significant breakthrough has been made by Brisbane's La Boite Theatre in the program towards its target of a professionally based community theatre. At a recent meeting, the theatre's Council unanimously carried two resolutions.

Council supports the policy of continuing growth of the professional resource staff of the theatre and,

Council supports the development of La Boite as a community theatre and accepts the need to employ actors and other theatre professionals — (those professional personnel to be used in one of the theatre's activities).

La Boite has always functioned as an amateur theatre, depending on its artistic director, administrative staff and the professional Early Childhood Drama Project, working for its pro-am status. The intention is that a core of actors will

eventually form the basis of community theatre work, offering experience and expertise to amateurs coming on to participate in productions and, perhaps more significantly, initiating projects involving members of the community outside the confines of the theatre building.



La Bode Artistic Director, *Malcolm Blaylock*

OFF BROADWAY, SYDNEY

Chances are that a new venue in Bay Street, Ultara, just off Broadway, could be opening before the end of the year. Jeremy Gadd (near recently of *Marius Sorel*) has bought the ex Methodist Mission, currently, between the two Grace Brothers buildings and has received \$15,000 from each of the NSW Premier's Department and the Theatre Board to run it as a venue — called Off Broadway — for hush to the studios, besides theatre companies of which Griffin and One Extra might be typical takers.

It would be a rough space with endless staging, there's a hall plus gallery and foyer with living accommodation above for the resident director. While it looks hospital, results of a grant application for capital improvement has yet to be known to make the project a certainty.

It's interesting to note that the State Government has decided to fund Off Broadway as an afterhours Sydney venue, while the Cleveland Street Performance Space, championed by Mike Mallen, has had its grant application knocked back.

DREAMING IN BLACK

by Paula deBurgh

Jon Sorel founded The Black Theatre Of Prague in 1961, and it was the company's artistic director. His involvement with the company is all-encompassing — director,

composer, author and, until 1970, leading actor. Sorel evolved and invented a technique which was loosely derived from the puppetry of eastern China, where objects appeared to move by themselves against a black background. He refined this early art form and introduced ultra-violet lighting, to create a theatre of illusion in which his assembled audience for twenty-one years. The company is called the Black Theatre because "their invisible, dressed in black, those who succeed in discarding the hidden secrets of things among which we live, are the main actors of the Black Theatre".

When Jon Sorel seeks performers to join his company, he casts a wide net. Approximately one third of the company comprises puppeteers, one third is made up of directors and actors, and a third, non-actors. During auditions, there are always people who come off the street to offer their services when the company Sorel has found over the years that some of these "non-actors" are very good instinctive performers — so nowadays there are always some in the company. Once employed, the company members are contracted for one year at a time. The Black Theatre tours abroad for approximately nine months of every year. This has, in the past, created domestic upheavals and rifts (as some of its members in recent years this has been resolved by the employment of young, unattached performers, as well as involved or married couples — creating a greater stability within the group).

The Black Theatre of Prague has toured more than thirty countries and finds that Argentina and West Germany are its most enthusiastic supporters, although the work is embraced worldwide. Presently they are visiting Australia for the third time, having previously toured in 1964 and 1976. After Australia, they go to West Germany and Spain, before returning to Prague to rehearse their *Wash Of Dreams* for another fantasy.

STOP PRESS...

BIGGEST EVER ARTS BEQUEST FOR NIMROD

Nimrod Theatre have just received the biggest arts bequest in history, and one which makes them the only theatre company in the country to own their own building outright.

The future of the company was unsure because the arrangement under which they paid a peppercorn rent on the old Caribbea Salt factory was coming to an end. Now a finance company, who wishes to remain anonymous, has bought the building and donated it to the theatre company, a gift of real estate worth well over \$1,000,000.

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3. **THE CLUB** by David Williamson
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The Suicide



NICHOLAI ERDMAN

Play 1: Nimrod Upstairs
OPENS Wed 24 Mar
CLOSES Sun 5 May

Deliciously funny farce. In my opinion it is one of the master pieces of this century. (J. G. Koppes C.M.H.)

Starring Peter Carroll
Directed by Aubrey Mellor
Designed by Richard Roberts

The Struggle of The Naga Tribe

RENDRA

Play 2: Nimrod Upstairs
OPENS Wed 16 May
CLOSES Sun 27 June

A brilliant adaptation of the traditional Javanese shadow puppet play. A satirical and very funny commentary on Indonesian corruption.

Directed by Chris Johnson
Designer Richard Roberts



PARTY WALL

KEN HORLER

Play 3: Nimrod Upstairs
OPENS Wed 7 July
CLOSES Sun 16 Aug

This popular three-act play, with music and songs set in the streets, captures the phenomenon of fortress Australia.

Directed by George Whaley
Designer Axel Birtz



Tristram Shandy

Play 4: Nimrod Upstairs

OPENS Wed 25 Aug
CLOSES Sun 3 Oct

Based on Laurence Sterne's comic masterpiece and devised by Tim Robertson and the Nimrod Company, this mixture of Bartholomew Fair and Hogarth's Blemish combines music and spectacle.

Directed by John Bell
Designed by Richard Roberts



York Theatre, Seymour Centre LEONARD BERNSTEIN'S

OPENS Tue 20 April
CLOSES Sat 12 June
One of the masterpieces of American Musical Comedy. Adapted from Voltaire combining the great talents of Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim.

Directed by John Bell
Designed by Roger Kirk
Musical Director Sharon Raschke



ARTHUR MILLER'S DEATH OF A SALESMAN

Warren Mitchell
and Mel Gibson

York Theatre, Seymour Centre
OPENS Fri 9 July
CLOSES Sat 4 Sept

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"Four plays for the price of three" and "Bargain basement prices" are current catch-cries throughout the land of Oz, where just about every non-commercial company is now on the subscription bandwagon, vying to offer patrons generous perks and cuts of up to \$42 on a pair of tickets.

Harry M. Miller and the Australian Opera began it years ago by doing in the phantoms, but gradually all subsidised companies, faced with ever-decreasing government assistance, have found the subscription system the surest source of revenue.

In Sydney, last to succumb is the Ensemble Theatre, one of the eight throughout Australia to have had its entire subsidy withdrawn. It is offering a three-play season that represents a saving of 55-75 on normal prices.



John Bell — to direct *Candide*.

A major snag in the system is its rely illustrated. In past years the Ensemble has been able to give extended runs to the best of the works from its annual Festival of Playwrights. This year, two of the four plays staged are worthy of more time — *Crucible* Cronin's *I've Come Afloat*, *The Seaside* and *Ken Ross' The Right Man* — but there is no way either can be slotted in during the subscription season and while interest is still fresh. No other suitable venue appears to be available.



George Ogilvie — directing Warren Mitchell and Mel Gibson in *Death of a Salesman*.

The Sydney Theatre Company is offering alternatively alive, an orchestra-play season, the *Nimrod* a four, five or six-play season, with subscribers free to make their own choice of plays. This, to some extent, meets a growing customer resistance to being committed to seasons they have no wish to see again to a "blind date" with untried new works.

Then and rising prices are the main reasons for a falling off in subscriptions generally. Many now prefer to wait for the reviews and make single bookings for the shows they really want to see. By so doing they usually save more than the saving offered on a season booking.

Two of the *Nimrod*'s six plays are tenti-commercial ventures to be staged at the Seymour Centre prior to national tour. They are the first Australian production of Leonard Bernstein's *Candide*, directed by John Bell for an April 20 opening, and Warren Mitchell recreating his triple award-winning portrayal as Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, directed by George Ogilvie

and with Mel Gibson also in the cast. It opens July 9.

Well, Barnson has arrived and *Chicago* and *They're Playing Our Song* are still going strong in Sydney, *Oklahoma!* is gearing up for an April opening in Adelaide and J.C. Williamson Productions Ltd is preparing the US musical *I Love My Wife* for presentation soon, in association with Louis Burke and Joan Breckhill, so things are flourishing on the musical front.

As I mentioned last month, there's more to come. The nostalgia *42nd Street* is a distinct possibility and JCW managing director Robert Ginn tells me casting difficulties which halted negotiations on *Sugar Babies* last year may now soon be overcome. Moreover, he may by now have been able to announce yet another major American musical to be staged here in April or May.



John Diederich — back from London to star in *Oklahoma!*

There was also a gleam in Peter Williams' eye when he took off with Gary Puddy on Feb 7 for a fast three weeks show-shopping spree in Los Angeles, New York and London. I'll not be surprised if by the time you read this there has been an exciting announcement from this quarter.

Peter, by the way, has assembled a truly all-star cast for his production of *The Anniversary*, to open for a six-week season at Sydney's Phillip Street Theatre March 18. June Salter has the *Bette Davis* role of Marn, John Hamblin is the transvestite, Henry, Alan Wilson and Zoe Bertram the young couple, Belinda Giblin and Malcolm Thompson the

other past Peckers are out for an interstate tour to follow.

Hands up those who remember Peter Summerton's 1968 production at Sydney's Independent Theatre with Allan Brighton, James Condon, Ross Thompson, Judith Fisher, Rosemary Butcher and Tony Thurbon.

Which is my cue to mention that Piccolo Teatro di Milano's opening night at the Seymour Centre on March 15 will benefit the Peter Summerton Foundation, which in July is bringing to Australia Yevgeny Lensky — a Russian defector now teaching drama at New York University — for a five weeks workshop for directors. The Foundation, set up after Peter's untimely early death, has brought several of the world's top directors here for seminars and workshops.

Piccolo Teatro, established in 1947 to preserve the Italian traditions of *commedia dell'arte*, is a Festival of Perth attraction and this two weeks Sydney season will be its only other Australian appearance. Tickets are \$12. Phone Valerie Newstead (36-4442) or

Jane Winchester (36-5262).

I like the STC idea of having the dead subsidise the living — that is, using money derived from plays out of copyright to encourage the writing of new Australian works. The Company has set aside \$5,000 from the proceeds of its 1981 season of *Hamlet* and will allocate \$2,000 towards the development to a production script of the three best "extensive treatments" — not finished plays — submitted.

Sought are non-naturalistic works, large in scale and epic in theme, that reflect the essence of the plays from which the money is derived. Acceptable scripts will be included in an STC season and usual royalties paid.

Wonder how many, if any, we will see of the spate of American plays on parochial schools apparently sponsored by Mary O'Malley's *Once A Catholic*. These include *Sister Mary Ignacia Explains*, a savage comedy by Christopher Durang, *Da Parent Lecher*, *Sister Really Refers Up?* John Powers' musical satirising bans such as this because one said the shoes reflected up a girl's dress; *Catholic Schoolgirl*, a comedy by Casey Kuehl, and *Man*

Appeal, I forget who by.

Expatriate Australian novelist Morris West has a new play opening on Broadway, his first since *Daughters Of Science* in 1964. Titled *The World Is Made Of Glass*, it is inspired by Carl Jung's haunting memory, mentioned in his autobiography, of a woman who did not identify herself telling him she had murdered her best friend in order to marry her husband. The murder was never detected. Local entrepreneurs will no doubt be registering interest.

New director Jim Sharman's bid for greater exclusivity for this year's Adelaide Festival has disrupted somewhat what was becoming established as a sort of Australian festival circuit.

Companies either invited by one of the cities or else visiting under their own steam were turning their noses to play the Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne (Mooramba) and Sydney festivals in quick succession. Despite Sharman, it's still a good enough play for the Black Theatre Of Prague and Stephen Barker's London Theatre Group to include most of the "circuit" in their 1982 Australian tours.

★★★☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

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Charting her own path to stardom is the unoppressed irrepressible *Robyn Archer*

by Michael Le Moignan

Work is Robyn Archer's favourite four-letter word: she delivers it with a vehemence other people normally reserve for the other four-letter words. She believes in "work for the sake of the work" rather than work for the sake of the reward.

She drives herself hard, with exceptional energy and enthusiasm. At last, after a full day of TV, radio and press interviews, she was unflinchingly good humoured about the prospect of packing and flying to Melbourne for more of the same six hours later.

Currently completing a national tour of two soloconcerts, one of Brecht songs and one of her own favourites, she is more than ever conscious of the Australian public's regard and affection for her work, and conscious of the responsibilities involved in occupying "an amazingly privileged position".

Singers, she feels, have been more

able than most women to break through the barriers set up by a patriarchal system. Personally, she is unoppressed and undiscriminated against, politically she is feminist and socialist, but as an artist her problem is to make a clear statement while maintaining a sense of ambivalence. There are no absolutes.

"The answer is that there is no answer." She quotes Brecht in support of her belief that it is necessary to attack corruption while remaining fiercely humanitarian. Even Margaret Thatcher, in many ways "an inexcusable woman", is a product and a victim of the patriarchy.

Her year of world travel has left her more determined than ever to chart her own course through the mine field of the star-maker machinery of popular and financial success. London gave her an opportunity to start again from the grass-roots, in a way she could not have

done in Australia. It was a chastening process for the ego but also a process of regeneration.

She and her producer-manager, Dr Marston, re-opened the Deaf Hall Theatre in Tottenham with *A Park Of Women*, which played to 98% capacity, was received rapturously by the critics from *The Times* and *The Guardian*, Irving Wardle (see Feb TA) and Michael Billington, and became the subject of a leading article in the trade newspaper, *The Stage*. She is sceptical about undue reliance on public subsidies, and her view was borne out by the response of the Australian High Commissioner in London, who offered a £100 guarantee against loss the day after the show closed.

A number of solo performances at London's National Theatre brought her into contact with the flourishing UK fringe theatre, for which she has the highest admiration.

There is, she says, no equivalent in Australia for this vast pool of talented and capable performers, writers and stage technicians, prepared to work for a prize for something they believe in. "In Australia, everyone's comfortable; in London, everyone's hungry, but they don't care!" Our own theatre "needs a backbone: there's the potential here but where is it?" There's no middle ground in Australia between Chicago and people bugging around in Woolloomooloo.

Ideally, she would like to do something more "up the alley", political cabaret for small audiences, but it seems unlikely that her own following will allow it. She returns to London in May to mount a production of her spectacular one-woman-show, *A Star Is Born*, first at Stratford East, with a likely transfer to the West End.

In October, the Sydney Theatre Company will put on her play, *The Concept of Carmen Miranda*, which she describes as "Katharine Hepburn with ten bananas on your head." Another play, *Il Magnifico*, about Lorenzo de Medici, which examines the whole area of arts sponsorship and subsidy, has been commissioned by Norwood for next year.

The work goes on, the energy and commitment are unending. Of the present tour, she says "Some of it will be good, some will be shithouse and some will be interesting. You can't ask more out of life than that, Can you?"

SIGNAL DRIVER

**PATRICK WHITE, and
director, NEIL ARMFIELD
discuss *SIGNAL DRIVER*
with GUS WORBY**



TIME: 9.15 am — a Thursday
PLACE: A dance library — an almost
marginal room. No windows. There is
a large scrubbed table at the centre.
Sunlit chairs.

Patrick White arrives early. We sit at
the table and discuss the questions that
might be asked. "Yes. Yes. Well, I
couldn't answer that. Maybe Neil." —
Neil Armfield arrives.

GW: *Signal Driver* is more than just a
new play, or a new Patrick White play.
It is the opening gambit for Lighthouse
and an important element in Jim
Sharman's Festival. Can you talk about
the play in both contexts?

NA: Well, the play shouldn't be
forgotten — as a new play. It is
obviously very important for Jim's
company and for Jim's Festival, and I
think it probably needs to be seen in
relation to a tradition of productions of
Patrick's plays that Jim has established
— magnificent productions which gave
an authority and a theatrical under-
standing to Patrick's writing. Although
I haven't seen any other production of
Patrick's plays than Jim's, I think it's
clear that they did allow Patrick's work
to be heard and to have an impact
which has been a major landmark in
Australia's theatrical history. And I
think beginning with a play by Patrick
does set a standard for the Company
which has been a kind of guiding
influence on Jim's approach to repre-
sent. Patrick is rarely seen in relation to
a tradition in Australian writing, when
in fact there is a very strong tradition —
going into Dorothy Hewett and Louis
Nowra and, I believe, Stephen Sewell
— of Australian writers who look at
relationships in terms of a much
broader and wider context than the im-
mediate surface of social interaction,
who see figures in a landscape and see
an interaction between the landscape, a
society, a setting and what's going on
between people. It's been called an epic
style, I'm not sure what the best word
for it is, but it certainly allows a breadth
and a statement which is extremely
broad in its scale and its scope.

GW: That is in relation to Jim's season.
What about in the Festival itself, in the
way the Festival seems to be shaped?

NA: I don't know a lot of the work that
is in the Festival, but having seen some
video clips of the Pina Bausch
Company, and having looked at a book
of Edward Hopper's paintings, there
certainly is, in Pina Bausch, a very

strong feeling of ritual — of the way that actions from the real world are taken theatrically and then explored, expressed, developed. In rehearsal yesterday we were talking about ritual in *Signal Driver*, and that there is a very strong feeling on the one hand of theatrical ritual and — a kind of theatrical history for me, in the Chorus of the play, who are two Beings. And there's a feeling that the platform on which the play happens — the kind of plinth, almost, on which the two human characters stand — is like a "tabula rasa" on which we look at certain human social rituals which are conditioned by age, by sex, by relationship, by expectation and by the condition of the stage and the history of the country in which they're living.

GW: Patrick White, have you any comments to make about that?

PW: No. I find it very difficult to talk about my plays, or anything I write, because I put down what comes up. And, I suppose a lot of it comes out of my unconscious, although of course you have to use your reason too, in the end, when you sift it. But usually I think it's an act of the unconscious chiefly.

NA: We were talking about this yesterday. That, Patrick, is what you see as the beginning point for a work of art. You do call *Signal Driver* "a morality play for the times" and — it seems very evident, particularly in the years since Gough Whitlam was Prime Minister, that you have been more and more conscious and vocal about the social role of the artist — well, the social role of any person in society — and the need to look and understand the world. I was wondering how much *Signal Driver* is an expression of wanting to say something very clearly about Australia?

PW: Yes, all through, but not directly. Most obliquely than directly. It's not a propaganda play or anything like that. It has been described as a play about three generations of Australians, I saw somewhere. But it isn't that at all. It's really about the decay of Australian society as reflected in two characters — a man and a woman, husband and wife, born about 1920 to the parents. And you get three phases in their lives. There's the youthful early-midday days, the dangerous metropolitan middle, and old age — the summing up of their lives together. And — well,

you see the way society has gone in Australia. There is a pretty chaotic and wretched, in spite of all the great horrors, we are given all the time. Although I don't think it is an unduly pessimistic play, do you?

NA: No, I don't.
PW: I can't say that I'm an optimist (laughs). But there's a lot of comedy in it.

NA: There's a great deal of comedy. One of the things that interests me in the 50 years that the play spans is that the first two acts are both set after quite major events and vastly changing incidents in Australia's history — the two world wars. The first act is suffused with an innocence, a youth, but which is also scarred by the war. One of the characters, Theo, has returned from the First World War, and his way of talking, his way of thinking, his way of relating, is all conditioned by his experience of war. By the time we come to the second act, which is after the Second World War, we find a country that is very much in the hands of economic and social forces beyond the world, or beyond the immediate world in history, of the "solid-though", the human couple of the play. And there is a feeling of where Australia itself, with these characters as representatives of the country, maybe, or large, or where Australia itself has gone in the 20th century. By the time we get to 1980, the world seems quite inhuman — the world surrounding the people. But, strangely, the people themselves, the characters, seem to grow in humanity as the play develops, and the last act is an exquisite portrait of two human beings alone in a hostile and angry world.

GW: Can I pick up two points? Neil has already started to come out of them. You seem to manage to work through corruption to a state beyond it — to some personal statement about a notion of beauty, particularly in love. And I gather from what Neil is saying that again this play possesses that course, that it resuscitates. Is that right?

PW: Well, I see that in the end you have to resign yourself to small victories.

(small laugh) — to bring on to those small victories. For instance, there is a metaphor in the play. Theo is a cabinet maker, and when he comes back from the war he's pretty scarred by life in the trenches, but he has — he says they weren't "visions", they were too real,

they were "pictures" of a "table that I felt I had to make." It is a kind of great kitchen table that will last forever. And in the end, after they've gone through all sorts of difficulties in their relationship and changes in society, when they are old and in some senses rather senile, this kitchen table crops up, and Ivy says something about — I forget what she does say, actually (laughs) — but the kitchen table is still there. And it's this thing they have between them, and she looks at his hand and she sees the same scar on his hand, the scars and stumps that they had on that kitchen table. She refers to it as, "that kitchen table you were going to make for me." And he says, "But I did and it's still there." And then she notices, and looks at his hands, and she won't really admit to her love because she is a rather grudging character, and she goes off and refers again to "my darling table", instead of him.

GW: So love is a table, as it has always been?

PW: Well, it's something that can — it doesn't always — it can endure.

GW: And the second point, — in that commensurability within the play. How does it manifest itself?

NA: It often manifests itself in people being nasty to each other. (laughs). Well, there are different kinds of comedy. It is often satirical, and some of the funniest moments of the play are the sparring that occurs between the two humans. But also there is this enriching commentary from the two characters of the Chorus who seem to be in touch with the kind of all-knowing, all-seeing capabilities that can walk down and place the action and the behaviour of the human beings in some kind of context, and the kind of momentary bitterness, sarcasm of the humans, and the violence of their relationship is conditioned very strongly by the kind of place that comes from the vision of the two Beings looking on — compassionate and amused.

GW: That takes us to another question that you wanted to ask — about the role of the two Beings.

NA: Yes, I was going to ask Patrick where the Beings come from inside him, and if they have a predecessor in his work in either the novels or plays?

PW: (pauses). I don't think so. I wanted to have a chorus, who are two — they're presented really as

essentially "dramas" But as supernatural beings they can shift back into the past and into the future in their commentaries, as well as keeping an eye on the present. One minute someone shoots up to settle something between the Great Snake and the Aborigine, in the past, and the next minute they know what's going to happen in the future And what else about the Beings? That sounds like something I arranged very deliberately (laughter).

GW: You obviously have a good relationship with your subconscious.

PW: (laughs) Yes, that came out of it, more or less, in the beginning — out of my subconscious. I also was rather frustrated some years ago. I was asked to give a composer ideas for an opera and I gave him the ideas. But he was rather horrified because he wanted something safe and Romantic. I think. Not something which would get him into trouble, and perhaps not be done by an established opera company. So that rankled a bit with me. And some of these ideas, and I suppose the chorus part of it, belonged to that area, when I was asked for the opera idea. And I think it is rather operatic — the play — with lots of songs in it and choruses.

NW: And structurally, Patrick has described the play as a chamber work, and it does feel like there are four voices that at times speak together — that are always advancing a kind of personal and character front — but also are in touch with the broader structure of the play. And you continually feel the play moving forward through the four characters in unison, or in harmony, or in solo pieces, but you're continually brought back to musical terms in describing the quality of the play.

GW: Maybe you could talk at this point about the setting of the play. Not so much the imaginative setting but the physical setting — the way in which it will operate in this space.

NA: (long pause — glances exchanged, smiles) Well, we didn't want to talk about this, but it probably connects. The immediate setting of the play is a public transport shelter in a landscape. The landscape changes around the shelter and the shelter itself is set in a theatre. Characters come from the theatre and move up into the performance space, and there is an entrance ultimately in the play to link the theatrical and the audience space, in a gesture which goes to the heart of the

play's direction, and the concerns which touch every character in the play. And that is that, despite the kind of pettiness that our lives are filled with, the play is very much in touch with something beyond us. This isn't presented as some kind of mystification, but it's located in relation to the human imagination. Patrick already talked about love, about the feeling that there is something that's maybe greater than us which is difficult to understand, but the force of which can be felt. In that sense, it's — well, I suppose a kind of historically Romantic "sime". Not that the play is looking at the world through any kind of rose-coloured glasses. Nor is it in any way sentimental. But there is a feeling of a force behind human beings, and behind the world which gives us a standard and a context for action.

GW: In terms of theatrical locale, then, and seeing the work evolve over a lifetime, we're talking about a progression from the corners of the mind, through the suburbs of the imagination, to the shelter of love.

NA: Very clever. (general laughter) I think.

GW: That's quite a lot about the play. Could we talk about the people involved in the production and the collaboration so far?

NA: Well, it's been a marvelous project to be involved with, because I have been able to talk to Patrick a great deal about the play from when he first finished writing it.

PW: Yes.

NA: Patrick has been involved in discussion with the designer and the composer. We talked a great deal for many months about casting. It has evolved on a very broad front, and each of the artists who have been involved in drawing the production into a theatrical shape have all taken a great deal of time to think about the play and Patrick's work.

GW: Patrick, Neil's talked about the benefits of collaboration from his point of view, can you talk about that gesture period as well? Obviously in one sense the writing has taken place over a lifetime, but has it now come to you quickly? Or in odd places, at odd times, as it appears have others of your.

PW: No, no, it did come quite quickly. Though I couldn't say how quickly it came (laughs). I can't remember

exactly when I wrote it. I suppose about a year ago. So much happens so quickly when you're old. You can't remember when you did something. I have re-written the first act quite a bit — just recently, before I came here — which I think has improved it. It is a much more inward play than others I've written, I think. But at the same time I like to think that it's very visual. Certainly I've been lucky in getting Stephen Curry as a designer, he's done marvelous designs for us, and Carl Vine, I think, has great understanding of what it's about, I haven't heard an awful lot of his work. I heard the music for *Pepper*, and — what else? — oh, some of the shorter ballets he did for Gaiene Murphy, I think it was. Between the whole I haven't heard an awful lot, but I have been very impressed by the — he doesn't say an awful lot, but you feel he's very much in tune with the play, very sensitive to the words of it, so that's a good thing when it comes to composing the music for the songs. I haven't had any dealings with most of the actors before. Only Kerry Walker. She was in a film. Jim did from one of my stories.

GW: *The Night The Prowler*.

PW: Yes, and since then we've seen quite a lot of each other and I know her voice very well, and it was easy to write something for her. I had seen Melissa Jaffer in some film roles and been impressed by her (and had always been very sorry that she gave up the theatre for some time, and that she's come back in this. Oh, Peter Cummins I've seen in film roles and liked him in those John Wood I've only seen in *Lulu*, in a part which I didn't think gave him much opportunity, but I think he's going to be very good in this. Those are the main things about the people who are working on it. Oh, and Neil.

(laughter) I have admired as a director over several plays I've seen him do *Jane's the Island*, which I thought was terrific. *The Eyes of the Witches*. I haven't seen the latest one, which sounds possibly the best thing he's done, *Welcome the Bright World*.

GW: In your self-portrait you talk fondly, but I think movingly, about Neil's generation, and Jim's generation.

PW: Yes.

GW: as those who might be your spiritual children. That obviously pleases you.

PW: Well . . . I'd wish for them a world free from nuclear war, chiefly, because there's going to be no more plays, no more anything, if we're not very careful. And that, to me, is the issue which concerns me most nowadays, and which I try to do something about. Ah . . . and I think there will be more and more theatre and film about that issue. At least I hope there will be, without turning it into propagandist stuff . . . I think there is an increasing need to say something in plays, not just to produce elegant nothing which some theatres tend to do. Without naming them (considerable laughter).

NA: I have been fairly public and loud, during my time at Narmond, about . . . well, a shared feeling with Patrick, that it is essential that our theatre reflects how we live our lives in the world, and comments on the way we live, and maybe helps us to confront life when we leave the theatre. I certainly share the feeling that the theatre, that any art, has the responsibility to look at, and to interpret, the world. Speaking about the inheritance that you mentioned from Patrick, I think that there's no question that there's been no greater writer and no greater influence in the history of Australian literature. Patrick's work is a huge monument to human spirit and to art, and to the power of the artist to interpret the world, and there's no greater challenge to respond to than the achievement of Patrick's life.

GW: Perhaps Patrick should have the last word. It seems that you've been coming home to the theatre for a long time. As a young man you existed on the periphery of it, wanting to find a way into it.

PW: Yes.

GW: Had a flit at it 20 years ago, and now have come back with a real flush of enthusiasm, and preparedness for a . . . Is that true?

PW: Well . . . if someone takes an interest in my plays. For a long time, not many people did. The Adelaide Theatre Guild did, years ago. And then John Sumner did a couple of my plays. But it wasn't really until Jim Sharman took me up as a playwright, and saw things that he wanted to bring out, that I was really encouraged to write for the theatre. And since then I have written a couple of plays, *Big Toss* and this one, *Signal Driver* . . . and I would like to write some more.

PATRICK WHITE-PLAYWRIGHT



1912 Born, London. Educated Australia including Kings School, Cranbrook, Massacre.

1928 Returned to UK, Cheltenham College. Wanted to become an actor.

1929 Australia, working as packman, writing poetry, sketches.

1932 Kings College, Cambridge.

1933 Plays performed at Brynast's Playhouse, Sydney.

1935 Graduated Cambridge. Sketches and lyrics for revues arranged by Herbert Farjeon and others at Little and Gair Theatres, London. Remained in UK; during war was Intelligence Officer with RAF.

1940 Return to Abyssinia staged Bolton's Theatre, London. While met William Dehelly in Australia.

1947 The *Ham Festschrift* published.

1948 White returned to Australia to live permanently.

1949 The 1962 Adelaide Festival Committee rejected *The Ham Festschrift* as "unsuitable" for the Festival. Adelaide University Theatre Guild produced the play.

1952 *A Cherry Seal* published. Premiere of *The Season at Sarapardis* by AUTG and also performed by Union Theatre

Superior Company in Melbourne. *The Ham Festschrift* produced by Elizabethan Theatre Trust in Sydney and Twelfth Night, Brisbane.

1961 ARIT produced *Season at Sarapardis* for Sydney. UTRC performed *A Cherry Seal* in Melbourne.

1964 AUTG premiered *A Night in Cold Mountain*.

1965 Publication of *Four Plays*.

1970 Nobel Prize for Literature.

1971 Revival of interest in White's stage work with Jim Sharman's production of *The Season at Sarapardis* for the Old Tote, Sydney.

1972 *Three Big Toys* which Sharman directed for Old Tote. Production toured to Melbourne.

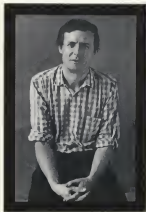
1978 *Big Toys* published. Currency Press. Film of *The Night The President Released*, directed by Sharman for which White wrote the screenplay.

1979 Sharman's production of *A Cherry Seal* for interim Sydney Theatre Company.

1980 *Three Signal Drivers*.

1982 Premiere of *Signal Driver* at Adelaide Festival by State Theatre Company of South Australia, directed by Neil Armfield.

The World of **DAVID HARE**



Major British playwright David Hare is here to direct the world premiere of his latest play, *A Map Of The World*, for the Sydney Theatre Company at the Adelaide Festival. He talks to Wayne Harrison

David Hare paces about the Sydney Theatre Company office like an expectant father. This makes the pregnant exceptionalist uneasy, but gives everyone else a chance to roll out their "birth of a play" clichés. The sun has returned to Sydney and the office is firing again with summer indolence. David is frenetic by comparison and comments wryly on "the brown bodies,

everywhere I look." Difficult birth this.

There are unusual complications. Perhaps appear necessary to extract Roshan Sethi, the Indian actor playing the novelist Victor Mehta in *A Map Of The World*, from New Delhi and get him to Sydney so that rehearsals may begin. The eighty-seventh attempt at

contacting him by phone succeeds and he's on a QANTAS flight from Bombay as long as his internal flight connects. It runs four hours late of course, and QFI departs him Sethi. More pacing about the office and contemplation of irony. "See what happens when you write a play about internal chaos in India?" says a well-known English playwright. The one bright spot in a trying week.

Greg Chappell's seventh duck.

I use the clause the cricket has caused to steal the following interview. During it David insists two things: biographical details and *A Map Of The World* details. "I go to the theatre to be surprised," he says. "You can't destroy the mystery by revealing the play beforehand." Nevertheless, certain information is making its way to the press — and Penguin Australia will release the playtext prior to the world premiere at the Adelaide Festival.

Still, respecting the author's wishes, I'll restrict information on the play to the Festival program synopsis: "Set against the background of a UNESCO conference in India, *A Map Of The World* centres on a confrontation between a brilliant, cynical, Oxford-educated Indian intellectual (played by Seth) and a passionately committed young English journalist (Robert Griffith). An American woman, Peggy Wharman (Penny Downie) becomes the trigger for an ideological showdown that plays the world's problems against the protagonists' highly charged emotional stakes."

David claims he's having difficulty unseating Australian journalism in a play about a conference on poverty, but adds that attention is guaranteed once he mentions that the cast and crew are "flying in" from all over the world. Indeed, the "internationalism" of the production is impressive: with the Australian majority being joined by Seth, Sheila Scott-Wilkinson from America, Kock West from West Germany, co-designer Hayden Griffin and lighting designer Rory Dempsey, both from England. And Hare, of course, who will also direct the STC production.

As for biographical details, a Cambridge graduate, David Hare is the author of *Stop, Knock, Famine, Tenth's*, *Snake* and *Pleury* for the theatre, and *Denise Of Leverage* and *Losing Holes* for television. In the last years, he co-founded Possible Theatre with Tony Blair, and in the same way that 18th century touring players constructed a circuit of towns they could successfully visit, this company created a new network of regional outlets, mainly in university towns where they could nourish a new type of theatre, a theatre of physical expression designed for an audience brought up on

a television/rock concert diet. "The idea was to take theatre to places where it normally didn't go," Hare has said. "We weren't to see that a variety of arts centres and groups would spring up to accommodate that. But when we started we played more army camps and bare floors than we were playing by the end."

It was during the Possible Theatre days that Hare commenced his long association with Howard Brenton and Trevor Griffiths. With Brenton in particular he has had exceptional success, having co-written *Brainwash* with him (1973) and directed his *Visages Of Happiness* (1976) at the National. The use from "army camps and bare floors" to the comparative splendour of Britain's National Theatre by a group of left-wing playwrights is surely one of the modern theatre's most extraordinary phenomena, with middle-class audiences "welcoming" those writers who said in 1972: "Our aggressions is extremely conscious — it strikes them a basic contempt for people who go to the theatre. It gets worse when we get near population centres. (We) loathe most people as individuals and, as a result, find people particularly objectionable. But the aggression isn't entirely spurious. We want to pick the medium of theatre and shake it by the scruff of its neck." "Having shaken it for over a decade, David Hare now prepares to infiltrate the Adelaide Festival Centre and the Sydney Opera House. What was the lure?

"I was asked to Australia," he says, "by Jim Sharman, who was speculating that if he invited me on, I might write a play. I said that he certainly couldn't rely on it, but if he wanted to gamble the Adelaide Festival's money he could. When I first came out last October, Jim was keen that I write about Australia, but on six weeks acquaintance that seemed to me an impertinence. And so, my way of writing a play about Australia is to write about the subject Australians least want to know about, the Third World. Australians find it difficult to take the rest of the world seriously, and I think Ramon Darcy (the Australian co-designer of *A Map Of The World*) put it best when he said that many Australians came here to escape from the rest of the world."

And A Map Of The World has to be

Have been for some time?

Not really. I'd written a great deal about England, spent seven or eight years — with turn-out for *Famine* — writing my "decline of England" plays. There were about the various states of decrepitude the country found itself in, and the reasons for it. I passed through a stage where the critics accused me of being hysterical, of exaggerating England's problems, to a stage where I was accused of merely repeating what other people had been saying for quite some time — i.e., I had passed from hysteria to chic — without moving through any middle stage. It was time for a change. I also felt that with *Pleury*, a play that has not been seen in Australia, I'd ended that phase of my work. *Pleury* is an underlining of this phase. And so I spent 12 months in America, and was determined not to write until I felt moved to do so. The result is *Soyuz*, about the fall of Vietnam — my American play — which Thames Television will produce later this year. The experience of having been in South East Asia many years ago suddenly became a focus of interest. Then Australia, India and *Map*.

What sort of research did the latest play entail?

People are very shocked if you admit this in public, but I have a sort of disdain for research. Well, I think there is a certain research which is useful, but any writer who is worth anything at all is going to guess, and guesswork is actually the basis of writing plays, not going on with a tape recorder. And it's been my experience that whenever you guess intelligently you find your guesswork corroborated. So it was with *Map*. I would conceive the events and the atmosphere as I would like them to be, and then I would show it to people at the United Nations, to journalists from the Third World, or to Africa experts in England. They sort of moved things about, but basically they confirmed the accuracy of the guesswork. If you can't guess, you shouldn't be writing.

Does your broadening of subject matter represent a general trend in British theatre?

No, no. Writers don't consciously move together. It's up to people on the outside to say "Oh this or that is going

er" and "Writers are moving here or there". Your own history is much more personal. Critics, or people who write about your work believe as if you have a lot of choice in the matter. They say "Why doesn't he do this?" or "What we want is more plays about this". But you don't actually have any choice. The trucker goes down and sometimes it will come up with hard wood, and sometimes with clear, fresh water. You just find you are drawn towards what you sense are rich areas. The more I thought about the forms I knew that I'd hit this incredibly rich patch that just suited me as a writer. I love everything about the fortress: the secrecy, the clothes, the look, the way people went off to die, the passion and the sense of sexuality. I just knew I'd be happy there. Similarly, I knew that Saigon during the fake peace was the kind of city I could write about. You get that mixture, you proceed, and the process of writing a play, as Victor Mchra says in *Maya*, is the process of discovering what you believe. How you find that rich patch to graze on is a sort of mystery, and to analyse it would not be helpful. It wouldn't be helpful to me as a writer to know why I chose particular subjects.

How would you describe the position of the playwright in England today?

I think we're very lucky. From living abroad I've had a great sense of how lucky we are, in that even if it is an illusion you feel yourself to be in the centre of something, you feel the history is listening, that your contribution to the debate about England has some currency. Having spent time in America I am aware that theatre there is completely peripheral. Americans go out for an evening of entertainment, to touch success. They don't want to listen to what the plays right has to say. But in England, because the country is self-doubting, because we are getting poorer and unhappier and we don't know why, we are willing to listen to any fool who has some suggestions about why this might be so. So there is a certain attentiveness in the theatre if you write about contemporary subjects, and people come wanting, actually wanting to listen. They respect your seriousness and therefore you are incredibly privileged in that you never have to where in the marketplace. The way we playwrights have declined

England in the last 25 years has had an effect on the way everybody reacts about it, the newspapers, the way it's been abroad. From abroad English playwrights are sort of quoted like our cricket team.

Is the rise to prominence of the British playwright to be explained totally in terms of social instability?

It's mysterious. There is absolutely no doubt that anybody under 40 of any talent who wanted to write or express themselves artistically in England chose public form, the theatre or television, whereas that certainly isn't true in America or here where there are still great novelists. Your novelists are much better than ours, you still have some sense of private work being valuable. In England the novel is a conventional form and why that I don't understand. What I do know is that a general mood of self-doubt is immensely helpful in getting a hearing.

What about the subversion of conservative theatre institutions like the National by radicals?

Both Howard Beason and I, who, by the way, have been writing in completely different directions since 1975, always felt that the only way of writing about our own times was on a large scale, which has meant epic plays. Plays that move from scene to scene, place to place, time to time, that are free on stage and involve showing the whole society. However, if you attempt to show the whole society, inevitably you find yourself in need of a Shakespearean sized company, able to portray, as Shakespeare's did, King, Lords, Higher Bourgeoisie, Lower Bourgeoisie, Peasants, Workers. To write about social things you need a company that are. And you need places with resources that can accommodate epic plays, ie, big theatre companies. And so these big theatre companies have been lauded for the purposes of the writers.

I might add, however, that I have never joined in the criticism of those people who come to the theatre. I'm grateful for whoever comes. I hope they're going to listen. I've never thought, "Ugh, what a horrible load of people." Similarly, I've never had a complaint against the English theatre. My plays have always gone on. It is my wish, however, that I could get more people to come and see my works.

Certain factors have prevented this. I only for dissemination of news of my work on the opinions of people who often misrepresent my work. These people are called critics, and they have let me down very badly. I am bitter about that. And while it is true that the writers have looted the theatre institutions, one is often at their mercy. It's very difficult to present epic theatre outside these buildings, but these institutions lack the energy to find the working-class audiences — and they combat any suggestion you make to try and co-opt new audiences.

What has been the role of design in the formulation of your epic theatre?

The contribution that Hayden Griffin has made to that side of my work has been tremendous, in that he gave me my eyes. I learnt from him how to run scenes in a way that enables you to truly compass them, which is a very difficult thing to do in the theatre. For example, if you say Scene One, America and Scene Two, Russia, people think that the audience is automatically going to connect. But it doesn't. Audiences see things sequentially. The whole art of how to create a world from an evening, of how to tie all the epic strings together, I've learnt from Hayden. He is the only designer I know who picks up the text regularly. He has a wonderful sense of stage and playing space. He is also a master technician, of the type you don't have here. He understands the machinery of the stage. From what I've seen it is the greatest thing missing from the Australian theatre. Although the writers are good, and a lot of the directors are good, and many of the actors are very, very good, young writers don't get the chance to present whole worlds on stage because you've never had the designers to invent these worlds for them.

And details of biography?

The only thing I'd like to say is how beautiful the Orana looked on Sydney Harbour. My father was punier on that ship, and so come to Sydney and see it was just fantastic. It was a wonderful glimpse from my childhood because "Where was my father all my life?" He was in Australia or sailing back and forth on the Orana. Australia was simply this place where my father was and so I had this poor opinion of it. Of course, the opinion is much better now.

What's new at the Playhouse, Perth?

Announcement of a stimulating 1982 series has brought a rush for subscriptions, doubling 1981 levels in a welcome vote of confidence.

Following the triumph of **The Man from Mackinac** (commissioned 1979), the N.T.C. now world-premieres another Dorothy Hewett masterpiece — **The Fields of Heaven**.

Warren Mitchell, last cast at the Playhouse as Willy Loman, went on to worldwide acclaim in the role and now returns to star with Robyn Nevin in **Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?** Then, in late April, Perth looks forward with delight to the brilliance of Timothy West in **Uncle Vanya**, directed by Prunella Scales. It's all proof that the theatre is alive and well!

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Directed by Rodney Fisher

With Natalie Bate, Lex Marinos, Joan Sydney

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

by Edward Albee (March 23 to April 17)

Directed by Rodney Fisher

Starring Warren Mitchell and Robyn Nevin

Uncle Vanya

by Anton Chekhov (April 29 to May 22)

Directed by Prunella Scales

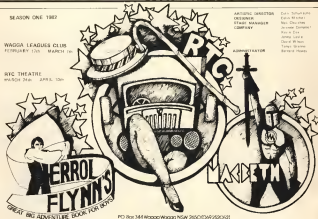
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GETTING THROUGH '82

All subsidised theatre companies face funding cut-backs this year. CATHY PEAKE spoke to the major companies to compile this report on their attitudes to and strategies for coping with their straitened circumstances.

So far, members of the major companies to cuts in funding from the Australia Council to the Theatre Board for 1982 range from the severe to the merely negligible.

Despite some additional money being released to the Board, and hence to the theatres (see info), most are keyed to the responses of their respective State Governments and to the budgets or otherwise of last year's box office.

But if the general mood around the country is one of determined survival and subdued optimism, it also seems clear that while the 1982 seasons will continue more or less as they were planned before the cuts were announced, there is considerable apprehension on the part of directors about the expansion of their companies' creative resources and their investment in future work.

Basically, the effect of the cuts has been an increased work load for smaller numbers of staff, and severe restrictions on the time and resources which, in a healthier financial climate, would be devoted to the development of new plays, community programmes, and skills within the resident company.

No money in the kitty, or the

attrition of reserves accumulated last year, means that it is difficult to commission works, bursars are shorter and the risks of experiment are greatly increased.

All of the major companies report that they are now seeking private sector support more aggressively, though it is strongly felt that this is more readily forthcoming to the prestigious national opera and ballet companies. So internal economies are in the process of reconstruction. Salaries of permanent staff, workshops, the number of plays produced and the general marketing approach of the companies have all been affected.

And since it is clear that theatre programs cannot be tailored to court the multi-nomads, the major concern is to build up paying audiences at the box-office.

The Nimrod Theatre, for instance, has redesigned its brochure along more commercial lines as a bid for larger audiences, while the Sydney Theatre Company has increased its top ticket prices to \$13.00 and has added a Wednesday matinee performance.

The Playbox system engineered by the Playbus Theatre, whilst not an

initiative for this season, has been stepped up, and the Perth Playhouse is now looking for corporate sub-scribers.

But the situation does vary very markedly from state to state. At opposite ends of the spectrum, perhaps, are the relative situations of the State Theatre of South Australia and the Melbourne Theatre Company, though the efforts both are making to increase revenue and cut costs are typical.

Adelaide is fortunate since its major funding (75%) comes from the State Government. Even there, however, whilst programming has not been affected, and the innovation of playing in repertory with a company of 12 actors will go ahead, the scale and scope of productions have been affected.

Plans to include a number of musicians in productions throughout the season have had to be reduced, individual productions often have been tailored and four vacant positions among the permanent staff have not been re-filled. Other members of the administrative staff have had to be relocated in the public service.

Whilst the company had tried to

around the impact of the cuts on the creative areas, plans for a contrary year of one production have been shelved and it is felt that the hidden risks of the repertoire innovation — with fewer shows and longer seasons — have been greatly increased.

The Melbourne Theatre Company has already moved into the fund-raising work to a considerable way. The Friends of the MTC — set up the year before last — continues to hold monthly programs, a fund-raising consultant has been employed, and a special sub-committee of the Board has been formed specifically to make approaches to industry.

As is the case with the other



QTC — longer seasons and no outside actors or directors

companies, the toll on the time and energies of the company is felt to be considerable. As well as getting on with the business of mounting productions, the creative staff is now required to spend time trying to stimulate interest within the business community

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PLAYHOUSE

MTC

MTC — fund-raising in a considerable way

through activities which can only be regarded as peripheral.

The MTC will stage only two large-scale productions this year and whilst, as with the other companies, the Australian content of their season has not been affected, programming has been tailored to plays involving smaller numbers of actors and simpler sets.

Two plays have been dropped altogether, which means the added risk

and say they can no longer afford to hire outside directors and alternate actors. A second resident designer and director have not been appointed, as was planned, and their Tangent Productions — devoted entirely to Australian works — has been transferred from four to two plays this year.

One alternative open to the companies and adopted by the Playbox, Nimrod and the STC is the creation of second venue activity where it is hoped that commercially-oriented seasons will generate additional revenue. The Playbox is currently touring Steven Berkoff, the Nimrod will stage both *Candide* and *Death of a Salesman*, with Warren Mitchell, at the Seymour Centre this year, and the STC has taken the unprecedented step of having the Theatre Royal for five months and has, in total, programmed nine months of



Nimrod — two commercial shows and a bid for larger audiences.

of longer seasons for the remaining productions, and a Theatre Campaign, where patrons will be asked to donate money and booths in the foyer, has been set up.

In a similar reaction, the Queensland Theatre Company have increased each of their seasons by four performances



STC — top ticket prices now \$13.90 and nine months of extra activity

additional theatre activity, feeling that the solution to current pressures is to be bolder rather than more tentative.

That decision to gamble with the need for bigger audiences, allied to the decision to maintain programming integrity and commitment to Australian playwrights is widespread, if uneasy. Despite the problem of raising sufficient capital from the private sector to make the Challenge Grant Scheme viable, no-one is panicking — yet.

Next month we look at the response and tactics of the smaller theatre companies to *Getting Through '82*.

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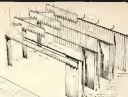
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Directed by
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TASMANIA'S REGIONAL TOURING DRAMA COMPANY



U.K.

Cargo Cult — Aeschylus at the National

by Irving Wardle

It is the belief of the Cargo Cult tribes that by overloading gnomes or replicas of aircraft with peopled documents at the controls, the gift of the whole rain can be induced to fall from the sky. Much the same sample technique takes possession of theatre directors in quest of the lost treasures of Greek tragedy, but rarely on such a scale as the five-hour *Orestes* which the National Theatre presented at the end of last year.

If Peter Hall had been tackling it at an earlier time in his career it is pretty certain that he would have sought some means of bringing *Aeschylus*'s world closer to ours, but that is no longer his approach. Prejudice for the production certainly dwelt on the feminine aspect of the *Orestes*, but only to say that it marked the transition from masculinity to democracy at the price of women's rights! Not that any such line of thought was viable in the show itself, which

came over, as usual with Hall's recent classical work, as an act of reverence towards its approved counterpart.

Underlying its every detail is the Cargo Cultist conviction that *Aeschylus* can thus be reached through an imitation of his own theatre. The *Orestes* makes use, as the NT is partly modelled on Ephelean, and this resemblance has been heightened with a text-book Greek stage *Anagoge* for the original music and text are supplied by Harrison Birtwistle's score, which accompanies most of the scenes, and Teep Harrison's barbarically rhythmic transformation of the Greek metres into the preceding alliterations of Anglo-Saxon verse. As in fifth-century Athens, the company of actors are all men, playing anonymously as masks.

Masks are central to the whole operation. According to Hall, the Greek theatre is itself a mask periodically removed (when the upstage doors close open) to expose the dreadful faces of the actors, but never the dreadful acts themselves. Likewise, for the actor, masks are supposed to furnish a liberating discipline for elemental emotion. Teep Harrison, whose highly formalised text is designed to serve the same purpose, even compares the stage mask to that of a woodworker, enabling him to look on a night that would otherwise burn his eyes out.

The main source of this theory is Hall's old colleague Michel Simon-Denis who taught that to wear a mask successfully is to become possessed. The actor submits to it,

and it is the mask that dictates his movements and the mask (if born lucky) that learns to speak.

No matter how magically this process may have worked for Saint-Denis, it has not worked for Peter Hall. There are one or two performances — such as the gold and silver *Clytemnestra* — whose voices transmit the sense of a super-personal man whose words suddenly alter in expression according to changing events. But most of the masks have not learned to speak, and with them you find yourself admiring with the man inside and wishing he would take the thing off.

This is particularly the case with the Chorus. Making a series of spectacular entries as greybeards (in the *Agamemnon*), women (in *Choephori*) and Furies (in *Libation*) they are subject to precise operatic discipline. Their text consists of verse paragraphs, each conforming to one emphatic rhythm and fixed tempo whether the lines are dishevelled or delivered in unison. Meticulous care has clearly been spent on them, but except at moments when they break out of the form — as when Chorus falls into a nightmare with the clanging Furies (pallid-voiced producers in scented droppies) — their impact is mind-bogglingly repetitious. Movement is merely mimetic, and all too often the very sense of the lines is nullified by the masks and accompanying rhythms. Instead of recovering a line of representative moral argument, you are left with Mr Birtwistle's tone-bomb



The Chorus in the National Theatre's *Orestes* — mind-bogglingly repetitious. Photo: Nobby Clark.

eking, percussion and conscious hazy chords which merely suggest that something nasty is coming down the pipeline.

The central contrast between black-supremacy and the loyalties of the human bond emerges in letters a mile high, but the style excludes detailed interaction and consideration of the tragic debate. It is all very clean and antiseptic, and in the best of taste, qualities it would be easier to admire if only they had been called into existence to build rapacious fumes in cheek. Royal Campbell summed up this empty cultural event in his lines about a man with a smile and a curb but no home.



Theatres the world over wait for the next Broadway smash-hit musical. Our US correspondent KARL LEVETT assesses:

The state of the art form

The ubiquity of the Broadway musical throughout the world confirms it as the genuine American art form, one made-in-the-USA product that the wide world is waiting for. In New York you'll see a poster with someone fiddling on a stool and in Holland the non-existence of hills are alive with the sound of music. In London last Easter it was a sobering sight on passing the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, to see *The New York Philharmonic* in Texas playing. In this large and venerable house was a musical with beautiful off-Broadway songs and one that, although vigorous and pleasing, was essentially mediocre.

Well, on a musical you'll find some of the other authors' crimes. That's when the American musical really looks like an art form. It is an art form that is now divided into two distinct categories: the big Broadway musical where increasing costs blink a CAUTION sign before producers,



Jennifer Holliday, Sheryl Lee Ralph and Loretta Devine in Dream Girls.

and the mini-musical found in Off-Broadway houses where the limitation is a matter of numbers and not creative effort. Sometimes the lines of the two categories get blurred and mini-musicals — *Barbers* and *They're Playing Our Song* — cross over to the major league by dint of production.

As evidence that music hath charms for producers, on Broadway at present of the 16 productions, 19 are musical entertainment of some sort. Of the 19, 11 are long runs, with *A Chorus Line* in its seventh year leading the pack.

In this race for riches, attention are constant and the most important one of the season was Stephen Sondheim's *Merrily We Go Round*. In tandem with Harold Prince as director, Sondheim over the last decade has been the single most important creative force in the progress of the American musical. *Merrily We Go Round* is an adaptation of 1934 Kaufman and Hart play, a story of show-biz kids told backward. As a book for a musical, it was schematically awkward and dramatically unconvincing, and the show was doomed from its unfortunate inception. The score, however, was top-level. Sondheim and already Frank Sinatra and Carly Simon have recorded songs from the show. The production is ended but the melodies may linger on. The audience is witnessing Sondheim, the American musical's resident genius, leading a couple of creative years

down the drain.

Broadway needs all the Sondheim it can get, for the musical arena has become one of extreme caution — safe and mandarin material presented spontaneously. *Fanny Seward* is an obvious example. In this conservative climate it is good to know that another risk-taker and creative force, Michael Bennett, is still stirring. Bennett — choreographer Bennett who gave us *A Chorus Line* this season has directed *Dream Girls* in Broadway parlance, *Dream Girls* is a "blackhouse".

The musical describes the rise of a black singing group — clearly based on the Supremes, with the Diana Ross character here called Donna Jones — and how the group fares in the big, bad world of Show Biz. Although a couple of leading critics have claimed racial significance for the tale, it is essentially another backstage story complete with goodies and baddies and a "the show must go on" mentality.

What it does have in the slickest and most dynamic production given to a musical in a long time. All this technology and the fertile mind of Michael Bennett can together create a show to drive the story along with the speed of a singing bullet. Everything seems to be on wheels — particularly Robert Wagner's steel light room and bridges that form a set that practically dances to the music. Add to this Tharon Wagner propelling computerized lightning references,

light years ahead of what we've so far seen. Indeed the whole look and style of the show is a technological marvel!

Happily, the players are strong enough not to be dazzled by all this hardware. This is a large cast that is uniformly good and points out the remarkable conservatism of black talent available in the US to be used by enterprising directors such as Michael Bennett. The stand-out is the 21 year old Jennifer Holliday as Effie, the roving member of the group who is hurtled when the vagrant homogeneity for the white market. Ms Holliday's anguished singing of "And I'm Telling You I'm Not Going" at the end of Act I is the stuff that Broadway legends are made of.

Devon Gels, however, has two weaknesses at her core. The first is the structuring of Tom Rym's book. In the second act the focus suddenly leaves interesting Effie and switches to slack Devon Jones and the show wobbles and never quite recovers its original spark. The second failing is Henry Kravitz's score which creates exactly the Metrop sound but only once or twice uses the stereotyped Kravitz ambulatory ones reminiscent quasi-operaic style, but the lack of strong individual melodies makes one suspect that perhaps technology also had a hand in writing the score. Everything that a director could do to distract us from these misgivings Michael Bennett has done. Flash, sass and bluntness are everywhere with *Devon Gels* being distorted within an inch of its life. In production values at least this is a significant step in the progress of the Broadway musical.

After *Devon Gels* the revival of *Little Me* seems at first to be a little old fashioned. This impression soon fades as *Little Me* reveals that as a musical it also has old fashioned virtues — namely, a first rate Cy Coleman score and positively cream-of-the-crop lyrics by Carolyn Leigh. First produced in 1962, *Little Me* was an adaptation of Patrick Dennis' novel and wryly for the talents of comedian Bud Casar. The book's author, Neil Simon, no less, this time has up'd the leading male role into two with the powerful characters played by Victor Garber and the older by James Coco. Neil Simon has added two new scenes, for his leading men with Garber in a love scene on the sinking Titanic, and Coco as a William Randolph Hearst/Camden Kane character in his Neil Simon style dining room.

Little Me is a satirical comic book, a nation-common stage example of American laughing at themselves (which might explain the original production's success in London). Neil Simon's one-line style with the fragmented story line admirably and director Robert Decca has seen that the capable cast maintains a consistent tone of mockery. Tony Wilson's light and enigmatic sets are in perfect tune with the book.

Cy Coleman score and the wit of Carolyn Leigh's lyrics. In song after song (including the two new ones in this version) Carolyn Leigh demonstrates lyrics of easy-going cleverness that are a delight to hear and to chuckle over. In these times to have the lyrics at the rate of a Broadway musical evening is an unexpected pleasure.

Off-Broadway musicals also continue to proliferate. The Off-Broadway mini-musical differs from its bigger Broadway brother in being much more flexible in form and far more adventurous in subject matter. William Finn's *The March Of The Pinks* which examines in song the plight of a family man with a homosexual lover is just one Broadway's cup of tea.

Maximally so, the smaller stages offer, often in cabaret style, sounds not heard on Broadway. One such show that has proved very popular is *Pump Boys And Dinettes*. It features what you might call country-pop or

rockabilly — a kind of accessible country and western with superior lyrics.

We're Down South in the good ol' boy town of Frog Level where the pump boys run the local gas station and the dinettes the adjoining cafe, The Double Cupp. A series of songs tells us all, about the individual characters, about living in Frog Level. It is an unabashed salute to downhome values, rescued by the fact that the songs (most of them by Jan Wynn who's in the cast) are original and pleasing, and the presentation in first rate. Wide-eyed innocents hold hard-edged professionalism. There's authenticity plus a knowing wink, as in the song "The Night Dolly Parton Was Almost Mine".

Should anyone inquire to us health, know that the American musical (both main and mini) is not actually blooming in at least alive and happily growing in New York City.



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FORECAST OF PARIS THEATRE PRODUCTIONS

The French Centre of the ITI has sent a list of productions coming to major Paris theatres during 1982. This list is available from the Australian Centre of the ITI. It is hoped that more countries will follow the French example.

15TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS OF THE PERFORMING ARTS (SIBMAS)

The Conference theme will be Stage Design: problems of collecting, cataloguing and conserving documents. Participants are invited to lectures and workshops. Further details and application forms from the Australian Centre of the ITI. It will take place at the Museum of the City of New York and the Library and Museum of the Performing Arts in Lincoln Centre, August 30 — September 3, 1982.

ITI COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION AND DEFENCE OF THE RIGHTS OF THEATRE ARTISTS

Members from the following countries have been elected to the Commission: Nigeria, Sweden, United States, Venezuela, Korea, Hungary, France and India. They are working to help artists who are being persecuted in many countries.

WORLD THEATRE DAY — 27 MARCH 1982

The central aim of World Theatre Day is to unite the largest possible number of participants in order to affirm the ideals of peace and mutual understanding through theatre.

This year's celebrations should be appeals for actions "to transform some of our ideas and projects into reality", in the words of Luis de Malmagro, Secretary-General of ITI in Paris. ITI Sydney will supply a page of text written by him for interested people for reading on March 27 from theatre stages in front of audiences around Australia.

World Theatre Day was first suggested in Helsinki in 1979, and the proposal of the Finnish Centre was adopted by acclamation at the 9th ITI Congress in Vienna in 1981. Since then, on March 27, World Theatre Day has been celebrated in 80-100 countries with messages from many world famous theatre personalities such as Ellen Swenson, Helene Weigel, Arthur Miller and Peter Brook.



Theatre Reviews

A.C.T.

Never better

ANNIE

by Ken Healey

James B. Thomas: Motion, Lincoln, Broadway and Martin Chuzzlewit; Lesley's Theatre: From A.C.T. Opened: January 2, 1982
Director: Terence Clarke, Designer: James Radzinski, Costume Designer: Marjorie Latham, Music Director: Pauline, Lighting Designer: Stephen, Properties: Linnaea, Props: Stephen, Backdrops: Michael, Director: Colin Fisher
Lesley: David, Wendy, Ronald, Margaret, Mrs. Harrigan, Maggie, Dennis, Anne, Belinda, Rebecca, Melissa, Jimmy, and Kate, Peter, John, Pauline, Colin, Sharon, Kenneth, Arnold et al.
(1982, musical)

Four years ago the Canberra Theatre Trust decided to tap the summer tourist market with a holiday musical each January. This year's show, *Annie*, attracted primarily local family groups, but was so far a personal success that visitors from anywhere should have been delighted to encounter it.

It was instructive to see many of the best amateur and some professional talent from Canberra respond with such care and style to Terence Clarke's direction. These are performers whose everyday standards vary according to the diverse directors with whom they work. That none of them ever looked or sounded better than in this show is a tribute to Clarke.

The star of the evening was undoubtedly the warm, magnetic Oliver Warbucks of Ronald Macraigher, whose well-allowed character to drift into caricature, missing abominably the proportions of fan and authority. Maggie Dennis's good-eyed Mrs. Harrigan turned all of the old maid's repressions outward in a display of badly focused theatrical energy, while the Annie of Belinda Williams had a little bit of honesty that was neither precious nor cute.

Among the minor roles, Colin Slater revelled in his boyish disguise as Anne's putative father, while singing up a storm to "Rise Again", Vivienne Arnold's Lily St. Regis was an hilariously unconvincing performance, while Kate Peters was pure class in figure, movement, and speech as Oliver's secretary, Grace Farrell. Such was the depth of casting that *The Gals* in made a convincing President Roosevelt and John Parley, an appealing bootler.

Musically, apart from the outstanding professional baritone of Macraigher and



Ronald Macraigher (Daddy Warbucks) and Belinda Williams (Annie) in CTT's *Annie*. Photo: Graeme Watson.

Slater, the charms of down-and-outs singing "We'd Like to Thank you, Heaven! Heaven!" was missing. The number that drew most applause was (predictably) the chorus of orphans singing "You're Never Fully Dressed Without A Smile", for which choreographer Stephanie Burridge had them moving even better than they sang.

The set by James Radzinski, based from the QTC, kept the show moving, two-dimensional pieces being flown in full view. Only the Warbucks apartment might have been more lavishly idealized. Graeme Macraigher's costumes (also from QTC) evoked period as well as social and economic levels most effectively.

Colin Fisher used a strong weathercoat instead of wings, with appreciable loss of effect, as tandem with his fine hand of wind and percussion. If this was an aesthetic misadventure, I'd prefer it to spreading the archival budget over a whole band of less

professional windaid. Musical tempo and rhythm were crisp and sparkling all night.

Finally, there's the show. It's not about an orphan seeking her parents, but about Annie melting the heart of Warbucks. It is therefore in the tradition of sustaining the romantic fallacy created by the American musical. As such it cannot not only on relevance, but shows a dangerous relevance today when the rich are becoming wealthier and another depression seeps in upon the remainder.

Nevertheless, any show that surrounds the double jeopardy of having both kids and an animal (in this case a really excitable New found land dog) is bare the stage with the actors discovers some measure of success. Unsurprisingly, the Canberra Theatre Trust chose wisely, not only in its musical, but in bringing Terence Clarke to town to show Canberrans how well the local talent can perform.



Alan Faudstach and Damien Carrigan in Ken West's *The Right Man* — best credits

communal celebration

Celebrating is an *act* (TV widely considered to be impossible without a glass in one's hand), but celebrating is what festivals are all about. We try to celebrate the best achievements on a wide variety of artistic fields, from the hope that enthusiasm and energy from one artist will spill over into

others. This is the short. In practice, the events assembled are unconnected and scattered all over the month and the city. It is difficult to find any sense of unity in the Festival.

Cultural overload is temporarily possible; the industry has a way of glazing over what that is not conceptual and focusing only on

the best. For me, three voices will, I think, remain vividly from Sydney 1982, of three unique performances. Joan Sutherland in *La Traviata*, Steven Berkoff in *The Fall*.

Take Heart and Ray Hemwood in Dylan Thomas in *No-Good Rose*.

The Australian Opera's first, open-air performance in the Domain may well have been Joan Sutherland's finest hour. At the deserted, contemptuous but astonishingly vocal Violetta, she was never more magnificently dainty and imperial. The house-crowd of more than 10,000 ignored the drizzle and the curious down-bum waiting their way to Centennial Park, and loved every note. From a quarter of a mile away, La Strupendo glowed like a great, green traffic light. The applause was ecstatic, frequent and deserved.

Festivals are an opportunity to make the circle, to draw in new audiences as well as pleasing the regulars. With the exception of the Ensemble's Playwrights' Festival and the Newrock's *Corby of Singapore*, Sydney's theatre companies have failed to realize the Festival's potential. The Australian Opera is showing them the way, with a bold and brilliant move, which has brought the company's essence and work to the attention of a vast number of people who are not regular opera-goers.

Steven Berkoff achieved the unusual feat of upstaging himself, in two adaptations of stories by Edgar Allan Poe. The first, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, a chilling 25-minute

monologue by a mad murderer trying to justify his crime, with a fascinating character study which had the first-night audience almost hypnotised. Berkoff exaggerated phrases and expressions and held pauses outrageously, but his concentrated energy demanded a rapt response.

The Fall Of The House Of Usher, which followed it, had too many similar resonances. Up to a point, the parallels were convincing and the production cast a fair amount of light on Poe's bizarre beliefs and fears. Either play would have been sufficient; both together were a little rich, and in the second play the dramatic tension lagged.

Also at the Seymour Centre was *No-Good Rose*, a superbly chosen and balanced one-man show, on the last night of Dylan Thomas, by an experienced Welsh actor from New Zealand, Ray Hemwood.

Hemwood's perceptive selection from the poems, letters, lectures and bar-room stories painted a very funny, very moving picture of the poet's huge and hysteric but ultimately tragic life. He was completely convincing as Thomas, shaming meekness from the beguiling, witty meekness to the self-paying artist, to the hard, thunderous Thomas memorable lines of the show were the famous couplet written



Cacophony's *The Drugged Agent*. Should be offered a season by *Nimrod* *Deconstructors*.

to his father on the subject of his attitude to death.

Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

The *Kosambi's Playwrights' Festival* at the Philip Street Theatre, which annually provides a one-week run for each of four new Australian plays, was a little disappointing after the success of recent years, providing no obvious choice for a full production at the more fashionable His Majesty Theatre.

The best of this year's offerings was *The Case About The Snake*, by Craig Cramer, directed by Alan Becker, an economic comedy about a millionaire who elects to have his body frozen for 100 years, out of curiosity about mankind's future.

There is the basis of a good play here. Workshopped at the 1981 National Playwrights' Conference in Canberra, the structure will does not effectively carry the writer's idea, but I think it is worth further work. There are some excellent moments of theatre, but the characters are not obviously drawn and the final result is not at all satisfactory. But the play was never dull, for the most part amusing and intriguing, and I particularly liked John Reeson as the Man and Ron Hackett as the Millionaire.

Ken Hens' political comedy, *The Right Man*, directed by Gary Barker, started brilliantly, treating the audience as a party pre-selection committee, then made some interesting points about the severity of integrity in politics, but overacted its cast and characters, finally losing all credibility.

Julius Snow, written by Jutta Fleming and directed by Doug Anderson, did not match their success from last year's *Responsible Playwrights' Festival*, *Hammer*. The story of the 13-day reign as Pope by John Paul I was an interesting idea which

became intricately bogged in dogma.

Comedies by John Baylyne, directed by Jane Oche, was an extremely silly play which got all its first caught up in puns and word play and promptly fell on its face. Somewhere subterfuge in the script was a warm and touching little romantic comedy, but whenever it dared to surface it was immediately torpedoed by the writer.

Perhaps the best of the Festival's fringe theatre was *The Drugged Agent*, a sharp-witted satirical review by a New Zealand company called *Cacophony* who have recently taken up residence in Sydney. The humour is in the style of *New The New* (Cuckoo News) and the principal weapon is parody, used with deadly effect in a number of quick-fire caricatures and sketches,

notably by Sally Ann Kerrigan and Michael Wilson. The musical accompaniment is lively and attractive, and the company has a first rate singer in Patricia Samuels. I suggest the *Nimrod* offer *Cacophony* a season (Deconstructors before some TV channel) pick them up and speak them.

The most eagerly awaited event on Sydney's theatre calendar was not actually a part of the Festival, although it opened in the final week. *Welcome The Bright World*, a new play by Stephen Sewall, directed by Neil Armfield, was an aggressive allegory of personal betrayal, a gloomy, visceral man's philosophy in mass and rather clumsily argued contention that the rage of the Red Brigade is a righteous rage.

Sewall's last work, *Tramway*, was a masterpiece of lucidity, which conveyed the most complex political and emotional ideas in the simplest possible words. We see with glimpses of this talent in the new play, where the writing is poetic and over-melodramatic and needs vigorous editing and clarification.

Max Githen and Barry Otto play two German scientists working on a new elementary particle theory. His life interferes with thought the radical daughter of one of the scientists (Katrina Foster, in a tremendously dynamic performance) seduces her father's colleague. He joins her at the barricades and the father gets information to the secret police. They have both allowed personal and political concern to distract them from the pure pursuit of truth, and both are doomed.

Evening of Arty's set and Neil Armfield's direction combine to give the play a grand, spectacular presentation that has all the necessary power but fails to exploit the more intelligent resources of the play. The result is not cold and cerebral, we need to be much closer to the characters, more personally involved.



Max Githen and Barry Otto in *Nimrod's* *Welcome The Bright World*. Both doomed in the pursuit of truth. Photo: Dennis del Favero.

QLD.

Reflections on the sunshine state

THE QUEENSLAND GAME

FLOWERS

by Jeremy Ridgman

The Queensland Game directed by director/producer La Bonté Brisbane Qld. Opened October 1st 1981
Director Brian Kemp
Cast: Chris Burns, Ryan Lynch, Maggie Neville, Tony Phelan, David Pyle
Based: Brian Men, David Pyle, Chris Williams.
(See also)
Flowers by the Lindsay Kemp Company like *Majesty's Brisbane Qld. Opened January 1982* Full review to be reviewed in detail next issue
(Professional)

If Malcolm Haylock, La Bonté's artistic director, is committed to sharing the company in the direction of community theatre, then *The Queensland Game* might well be a case of farcical delight. Six actors and director Brian Men, most of whom spent their youth in rural Queensland, have collaborated to present a past-parody of

songs, anecdotes, character sketches and scenes celebrating the folk mythology of country town life. But they do with skill and wit, cleverly turning a comic between the Neilsen and Chaythide of hearts making and cynical condescension. Most of the almost separate sketches, such as Belle-Permet's vision of Queensland in the Australian Elysium and his wife's secret formula for the perfect pumpkin soup, are amusingly dispatched in an opening second evening having cleared the air of the obvious, as it were, Men and his cast proceed to weave their own rich and comic tapestry of rural life.

If there are a few threadbare patches towards the end of the first half, they are redeemed by a pleasing sense of shape in what could easily have become a mere hoch-poth of "faros". The performance begins with a moment of quite unprecedented signatory as each actor "trick out" a personal reminiscence on the audience and cast, a brief warm-up for everybody the finale finds us in the dying moments of a local hog, complete with Mexican Hat Dance and Lucky Spot contest, to which all, of course, participate.

The town hall dance in her form one of the unruly structures in the show and produces some beautifully observed moments, an awkwardly dull rock group specializing in half-hearted riffs and drum rolls to punctuate the MC's quips and announcements, some subtle rucks, subtle spots and an exquisite wording sequence in which three local dukes become in and out and depart themselves with purely ill-founded self-confidence before the female members of the audience.

The other principle setting is the local

pub, with its unrelentingly familiar faces, anecdotes and minor rituals. Here the pace understandably flags as the dirty roared veeps on an almost blackman glass, but here are found some of the cleverest characterizations of the evening, the local grader driver obsessed with the minutiae of his harrow battle with a particularly intransigent lump of dirt, and a fresh young teacher who gets the counter-son from a young lady and confidently chaps her up, only to learn later that he will be meeting her next day, in his grade eight class.

One of the most memorable sets from the show is Tony Phelan's brief portrayal of a country town hardware, a double-edged study in resilient optimism. Back from the week's shopping, she battles with two tremble but obviously genuine dogs, human over the sartorial blunders made by the reflex in the new patch of family snags and, in a frantic telephone conversation with a laconic neighbour, promises to provide once again her specialties for the annual fete. Earlier highlights made from ice-cream cartons decorated with chicken work etc. There is not an ounce of dogmatism in Phelan's approach to his character, the laughter is that of recognition but the humour disarms and partly erases the details of daily life. Perhaps that is what celebratory community theatre, like *The Queensland Game*, is partly about.

The arrival in Brisbane of Lindsay Kemp and his more-dance company (to be reviewed later in more detail) was heralded by a storm of controversy and speculation following the Premier's announcement that he would take steps to save Queensland from "moral degradation" by seeing to it that there was no "bawdy house" (his words) on the stage of His Majesty's. One assumes that one of his unofficial moral advisors had, as frequently happens apparently, seen the admittedly provocative publicity brochure and made a quick telephone call and that in the light of Mary Whitehouse's recent crusade against simulated buggery in the English National Theatre, it was mainly the thought of "poorness" that worried him.

The local press had a field day, with letters, leaders and lead-ups, as the spirit of Norman Stanger walked the Brisbane stage, would Queensland, in the face of world-wide approbation for Kemp's artistic conduct, openly condemn to the newspapers that has become part of the state's image? Panties abandoned, in which burly policemen waded onto a stage swathed in smoke and lights and attempted to restrain and then arrest muscular naked dancers. Also, for some, it was not to be a handful of police officers sat impassively through *Flowers* and next day it was announced that no Queensland law had been broken. (No-one seems to have asked what needed to have happened for an arrest to be made.)



Chris Burns and David Pyle in La Bonté's *The Queensland Game* — almost Beckström glass at the pub.

And what of the show itself? The 19 minute season straddles more than the history of the prisoners. Having seen *Flowers* six years ago in London, I was grateful and more than surprised that Kemp, with a company only two of whom are from the original cast, could still generate the same frisson. There have, in fact been subtle revisions, lighting is more sophisticated and the central bar room scene, in which three whores pathetically attempt to lure the gamin-like Lady of the Flowers away from the coup de foudre gaze of Devine's lover has taken on a richly comic dimension. There is no glossing Kemp's shipwrecked, not the magnetic effect of his own unlikely presence in Devine, from the first glimpse of her gliding entrance to the last spasm of her voluptuous death-thrills.

Rocks, grips, explodes

NED KELLY

by Fiona Perry

Ned Kelly — the Electric Music Show to Big Limestone. Music: Patrick Flynn. Ned: Steve Thomas. Co. Leonard and North Old Street. Cast: Linc. (Season January 27, 1982). Director: Terry O'Connell. Musical Director: John Bustin. Designer: David Bell. Choreographer: Alka Kadage. Lighting Designer: Michael Elliott. Sound Design: Ross Brown.

Cast: Stephen Clark, Bob Brown, Wayne Pappan, John Bustin, David Sandford, Ken Ralph. Stagecraft: Wayne Joe Spence, Peter Barling.

(Profile only)

A new theatre company is always an exciting prospect, especially in an industry that has just woken with severe and disheartening cutbacks. The New Music Theatre Company of central and northern Queensland may be the last of an endangered species.

In the deep north, the air is heavy with expectancy, risk, optimism and the irresponsible hopes of a community who have had to export professional theatre far too long. Whether it be "wild-eyed angry young people" converging on the desert's syndrome, a simple touch of the sun, the dreaded disease "gonc tripper" or a terrible sense of responsibility, that company has a rare urgency and a quiet femininity, as they present permanent professional theatre in far northern Australia.

Where southern audiences have recently seen a fall in the number of young people attending, this company's opening production of *Ned Kelly* the Electric Music Show has rural youth returning in five years after the original, in a production that is overwhelmingly theatrical (not theatrical), that doesn't cravily stuff with design, the elements used to nail the Livermore



Stephen Clark as Ned Kelly in New Music's production. Photo: Pam Iremonger.

production *Ned Kelly* is not an ill-fated choice, it rocks, it grips, it explodes.

Images, stark and unflinching, come on from the sea with six classical lines and engraving rocking home, from the actors expressing lines of mind with their leaders, from projected slides and the text and impact of the re-arranged score.

Ned Kelly under Terry O'Connell's direction becomes a sophisticated exposition of intellectual symbols, and emotionally charged rhythms that circumvent but are vocally, instrumentally and bodily Alka Kadage's *Over Coloured* Civil choreography returns minutely to this Steve Han, the dandy, rounder jambo's presence with his thighs, Joe Byrne moves far more aggressively, Commissioner Hare needle steps like Paganus (one of Brown) and the policeman yank it to an absurd goose-wag. Steve motion running strokes and his a hypnotic effect. As names, the raw edge of the music demands more abandonment. The passion, violence, grief and horror, they are always controlled. Only Ned breaks the right side.

The sound is basic but the singing never is. The actors also form the band although the audience is never aware of the swelling that must go on backstage.

Technically impressive, the show is and very aware of itself, very studied. There is a mega-urdu smell lurking in the presentation, even the rocking home is a little Steve Strange, the anti-authoritarian theme, just a little slack. It's saved from being just an extended film clip scenario with some moody stylisation, Gaudy fullness and overbearing production by the connection that is Stephen Clark's Ned

Kelly. The padded shoulders and waist-band could have ditched him into a shabby grove. They don't, because force, gentle, half remorse, always actually real, he makes you care from the first when becomes of him.

Almost always on stage, he responds with his body, his voice, stabilising the dramatic and romantic, coming and reasoning all the emotions and he holds the interpretation together. That is it, it should be, a terrifically nuanced voice and a powerhouse performance.

Joe Spence as Aaron Sherratt is the only actor to exploit the potential of his half-mask. Beneath it, his eyes show the wet glaze.

From the first tableau where Ned Kelly takes off his mask, to be the only actor without, the production commences unmasking the things about the legend, about Australia and the Ned Kellys who are still defiant, still on the run. The fugitive is pursued down three horizons of persecution, the dark sufficing of the Irish, the Kelly story itself and spilling onto the screen, slides of troubled Northern Ireland, in the worn face of a sniper, the tension in a group of English soldiers.

From the first image of a black umbrella rising like a bird of prey to the final paradoxically negative imprint of the nose, high over the execution scene, *Ned Kelly* produces home. Life is a rocking home that never stops, a music that never comes off and it does, the final song inside the nose in the empty lives of those who risk, the final knowledge, "they'll burn the Kelly's till the last one dies."

VIC.

New plays, old ways

NARROW FEINT ILLUMINATED DUCKS STEFAN

by Suzanne Spenser

Narrow Feint by David Knight. Melbourne Theatre Company, Adelaide 2, opened Jan 13, 1983
Director, William Lodge (Designer, Mark Wager, Lighting Designer, Neil Pickering, Stage Manager, Bryan Gorman)

Cast: Margo Alexander, Ross McLaren, Victoria Wardwell, Rob McElwain, Harold Quadey, Andrew Martin

(Performed)

Illuminated Ducks by Hazel Barry. Artful, South Melbourne, Vic. opened Jan 17, 1983
Director, Brian Reynolds

Cast: Grant, Hazel Barry

Stylen by Paul Langer. La Morte Theatre, Melbourne, Vic. opened January 19, 1983

Director, Paul Langer. Stage Manager, Tracy McCann

Cast: John, Paul Calver, Mylaine, Margot Knight

(Performed)

Three new plays by new writers ought to be an event to be welcomed, however *Narrow Feint*, *Illuminated Ducks* and *Stefan* in different ways are disappointing. All three have been produced by new directors in contexts potentially conducive to experiment and innovation, however they lack theatrical invention and the sense of discovery that can accompany new work.

Of the three, David Knight shows the most promise as a writer for theatre, he is an acute observer of character type and situation and has an ear for the cutting phrase and the telling aphorism, but his character development and scene structure are tentative and awkward.

Narrow Feint charts the progress of a bright but erratic student, Harold Quadey, through a traditional school where he clashes with a cynical, ill-tempered teacher and a progressive school where he is taken under the wing of a female teacher. In the background are Harold's ambitious parents and sundry psychiatrists all trying to understand what makes young Harold tick. In the second half of the play Harold has left school, and is working for the local council as a surveyor, his father has died, the cynical teacher has become a successful television personality and Harold's name has been retrospectively linked in a scandal with the progressive teacher. Or at least this



Andrew Martin (Harold Quadey) in VIC's *Narrow Feint* — flashes and fragments. Photo: Geoff Burby.

in the stated scenario of the play, but unfortunately a major element is missing — the audience's ability to believe that Harold was over-familiar or particularly unusual. In fact Harold and Harold's problem which led him to attempt suicide in the first act is the least engaging aspect of the play, let alone the supposed contrast between the two teachers.

The only interesting and sustaining thing in the play is the development of the cynical master, Woodcroft, and one almost wished that the entire play had been built around him. As it was, one was left with a series of subplots as various institutions — schools, the media, advertising, and the helping professions, a collection of clever one-liners and a lot of gratuitous theatrical business. Rob McKean's performance as Woodcroft had a comic edge and brutal edge that carried the play across the languor of the script without him. William Clark's direction was tight but ultimately unable to weld the flashes and fragments into a credible or satisfying whole.

If *Narrow Four* strained too hard after darkness, then the best that could be said about *Illuminated Ducks* and *Stylos* was that the writing was modest and unaffected.

Harriet Barry's one-woman show, *Illuminated Ducks*, had a simplicity and directness as its address to the audience, as Connie a young wife and mother reveals her experience in the Depression. Director Elena Brennan put Connie, played by Harriet Barry, in a relatively enclosed space in the backyard of Arthur and let her talk. Barry's performance was as subtle and unpretentious as her writing but as a theatrical event the price left much to be desired. It may as well have been a radio play or performed indoors on a bare stage because at no point was the integrity of the space ever assaulted or the relationship of the actor to it ever explored, instead there was a sense of watching a recitation outdoors for no apparent reason other than it provided an "interesting" background.

Paul Carter's play, *Stylos*, at La Marna was unaffected to the point of utter banality, had it been shorter the plot might have sufficed for a provocative advertisement for Christian television 15 years ago on the plight of unmarried mothers. Seeing it as exhaustive length in 1982, it was the stuff of an acutely embarrassing and boring evening at the theatre, made even more painful by its obvious sincerity and earnestness. To say that the portrayal of the young woman was misogynist implies more considered attention to the writing than it merits.

There seemed to be a den acknowledgement that the audience were aware in the fact that the play was interestingly set in 1930, however in the dearth of dramatic language and costume were remarkably only underscript, the actual time the events took



Harriet Barry as Connie in her play *Illuminated Ducks* at La Marna.

VIC.

continued

place seemed quite irrelevant. Unmotivated by wit, insight or even minimal theatricality, *Striplin* was one of those plays that could go on for ever but fortunately only lasts for a couple of hours.

You have to laugh

BUS SON OF TRAM

by Garric Hutchinson

Bus, Son Of Tram (Barrow Lounge, Comedy Cafe, Melbourne) *Mr Rod Quanzack, Mary Kennedy, Steve Blackmore, Geoff Tait*

Well, you have to laugh, don't you? I did. I really did, laughed into the night, over the vegetable crucifixer, the spicy sat and the rest of the selection of deserts.

I laughed at what Rod Quanzack said inside the Barrow Lounge, which is just what is above the Mashed Comedy Cafe, and then I laughed at what he said on the bus.

He'd threatened us with the bus you see, but we didn't really know whether it was a joke, as in nothing that doesn't really happen, or a joke, as in you actually get on the bus and drive around. It turned out to be a joke of the latter kind, that is we got on the very clean and comfortable bus and drove around. And laughed.

Prior to that in part of the first kind of joke, that is when we didn't know whether we were going on the bus or not, Mr Quanzack had looked extremely worried as to where we would go on the bus if indeed we did go.

The Myers window had come down you see, it being well after Christmas. Well not the actual window but the kitchen decorations inside the window, a sort of sparse shrine for Melbourne's for unadorned persons. That was where you used to go in the bus if indeed the driver or someone to go on the bus manifested itself in actual forward movement.

So Mr Quanzack, in the absence of the Myers window seemed as a temporary loss as to either thing, which reinforced the idea that we weren't in fact going anywhere.

In other words he got us in.

We're in the queue at the top of the stairs with our red tickets, the people with the

blue tickets are still sitting and drinking and eating, and we're still not sure.

Outside in the red light district of Fitzroy, in another queue, walking around the corner, we're still not sure. Even on the next and closer bus driven by either Jim (at least I think it was Jim) we're still not sure.

It drives off. Now we're sure. But where are we going? Surely not to the naked Myers window?

Mr Quanzack holds up a clock on a stick. Follow this clock wherever you do whenever we go. This clock could mean the difference between life and death. Keep the clock in sight.

We mean to, we really do because the bus has driven off down roody Barrow Street and turned left into the legendary Spanish kind of Johnson Street, where Mr Quanzack calls out "Myon'te a Spanish, hold up your hand!" And some do.

This goes on and on. Left up Nicholson, past the home of a friend of a former acquaintance of a mate of the daughter-in-law of someone who once won Spazity Taylor and knew where he once had his weary dead head. And then it's Spring St



Rod Quanzack

and the red ticket about the Windsor Hotel, and Parliament House and then it's left up Mags Alley and the damned bus stops.

We have to get out.

Follow the clock! Keep the clock in sight! Through the darkness of the Fitzroy Gardens, a great troop of middle-aged, middle-class, middle-muddled aficionados

of grotesque comedy troop.

We're off to Captain Cook's Cottage, not that it was but someone said he lived in something similar. And the Fairy Tree. And the Model Tudor Village. All the night. There's even a police patrol on something through the bushes, looking for just only know what or who, but certainly not us, we hope. And we hope that Mr Quanzack and his pal Mr Tait won't do anything to the policemen causing them to make an interest.

My page as it is though, in a big horizontal crowd in the dark forest. But what's this looking, or listening on the bus? It's the (obviously) wealthy Hilton Hotel and we're going there, we're going into the foyer and Mr Quanzack is up at the desk along for a single room for 50. We hope he doesn't go through with it. They haven't got us.

Hedonist? And we escape back to the bus and under George (was it George?) and back to the Barrow Lounge via a verbalisation of the Comedy Cafe's seemingly prosperous road. The Last Laugh, and the Yugoslav district of Fitzroy.

I'd laughed and laughed. Fenny as a ride in a bus with a bunch of drinks and a comedian. Sent of you out of yourself, you see.

But that wasn't all. When we'd sat and drunk our mean temperance beer there was more to laugh at.

Debbie named up Debbie's a real joke, you know, especially when she's with Tim. They're both so politically aware you know, and culturally on the ball. Would you make fun of Robert Archer? Gee, I wouldn't. That's like laughing at Aristotle. On the face of it, silly.

Anyways Debbie's you know someone like Debbie who's socially, ah, politically, ah, culturally, ah, interpersonally, womanly ah on the ball. Getting into things. And, you know, like wrapping her head around when's messianically potent in this space-time continuum, right? Not too happens, right? Not a real time interface with where she's positively at, right? More than a gas, less than solid, right?

We laughed, right? We had to. Mr Quanzack, who is really Mr Kennedy, who the real Mr incarnation of Debbie, right?, was sitting not one chair away, his hand on his nearby handle. You've gotta laugh, don't you?

Laugh?

Except, that's what we should have had. For a genuinely original, one-off, unique, historic, never been seen or heard of before except for Trains, usually, Dad of Bus, non-descript son of right and you can only have live, in person with the actual person or person there understanding it.

I mean it wouldn't be the same as a movie or book or Fenny support. You had to be there, and one day it'll be possible to describe it.

Laugh? I could have killed myself!

W.A.

Spectaculars big and small

THE SERVANT OF TWO MASTERS

THE WIZARD OF OZ

by Margaret Luke

The Servant Of Two Masters by Carlo Goldoni
Milton Miller in His Majesty's Theatre, Perth WA
Opened January 11, 1982

Director: Douglas, *Raymond Osmond*, *Music:* Bryan and *Musical Director:* Bruce Pollockton, *Lighting Design:* Robin Macvicar

Cast: Donaldson, Glenn Hitchcock, with Edgar Heyworth, Terry Johnson, Ivan King, James Bean, Allan Piper, Frank Johnson, Caroline McKenzie, Gerald Hitchcock, Bruce Pollockton.

Reviewed

The Wizard of Oz adapted by Peter Weiss

Directed: Douglas, *Scenery:* Douglas, *Music:* Douglas

Director and Choreographer: Peter Harris, *Designs:* Henry Harrison, *Musical Director and Piano:* Karl Dietrich, *Production and Sound Effects:* John Graham, *Lighting Design:* John Doolie

Cast: Kelly Pearson, Pat Stewart, Penny Hinton, Martin Forster, Duncan Macdonald, Tony Percot, *Musical Director:* Kelly Goss, *Musical Director:* Kelly Goss, *Music:* Kelly Goss, *Music:* Kelly Goss, *Music:* Kelly Goss

Reviewed

In the prologue to *Goldoni's Fiasco*, the theatre director instructs the poet in the art of producing acceptable entertainment, and his top priority is "above all — make sure there's enough *laughing*." The holiday shows would have met with his complete approval.

The big professional offering at His Majesty's was designed to appeal to all ages and tastes. Cleverly adapted to contemporary resources by John Newby and Raymond Osmond, Goldoni's *The Servant of Two Masters* was a colossal romp, part farce, part pastiche, breathlessly busy, with music — according to the programme — from popular to very popular. This meant in practical terms that the action was helped along by set-ups of both opera and pop music, always with a sure sense of the appropriate style.

The complications of the plot — involving a servant being himself out to two masters who, as it happens, are lovers, engaged to be married — actually searching for each other — provide enormous scope for every style of comedy, with mistaken identities, mistaken motives and, of course, mistaken sex.

Settings were brightly idiosync in appeal,

and the costumes suggested the appropriate parts of lovers were colour-matched outfits, and there were most satisfying visual effects of slowly gliding gondolas and atmospheric star-shoulder sky.

The modelling after Glenn Hitchcock played the Servant in a dramatic style that has become his personal trade-mark. Caroline McKenzie was both devious and dithyrambic in her line "master", and Allan Piper sketched the plot-part of Scaramione, a manœuvre in love with the Servant. Not only was she one of the few members of the cast who managed to keep up the absurd Italian accents throughout, but she created a lively, gaily character. Terry Johnson, continuing her holiday from gender opera, with a pay to being, and the ducts between her and Caroline McKenzie were particularly effective.

Individual characters were nicely differentiated. Edgar Heyworth's Scaramione, comically small and dumpy, Ivan King pedantic and legimate, James Bean and Gerald Hitchcock both very much reminiscent gentlemen but with the gestures of master roles of the '60s.

Bruce Pollockton, who devised the music, also provided the excellent piano accompaniment and furthermore played "frenziedness, portness, western, gondolas, crowd etc."

Add to this that the whole thing was presented in a play within a framework of a busy Italian involving theatre company, with direct comments to the audience, and the State motto "relax in a state of excitement" was well demonstrated.

At the University's Dolphin Theatre the University Dramatic Society embarked on the ambitious project of a major-spectacular *The Wizard of Oz*, although clearly done "on the cheap". It was a remarkable effort, making up an imaginative approach and design which lacked in funding.

Armed primarily at child-audiences, it kept the adults' attention. It was diverting

to observe the modern, telly-oriented kids' reactions to the "Over the Rainbow" song proved too long and too slow, as did the longer dialogue and the "clever" lyrics of the Cowardly Lion's song. The song-and-dance routines ("We're off to see the Wizard") were a bit, as were the chorus numbers, Marchion children tripping across the stage in green tunic costumes, and the musicians and friends of the witch were of minor interest. Theatrical effects actually scared the younger members of the audience (but only briefly), and the few opportunities for audience participation showed total involvement — evidenced by spontaneous screams of warning to the heroine when danger threatened.

Asking some youngsters later which had been the favourite character and the best bit — the Wicked Witch was hands down, especially her readiness of "Let's Go Physical" near the smouldering children.

The student players attacked their roles with gusto yet sophisticated humour, particularly Penny Hinton's squeaky and precociously condemning Good Witch was very funny, as was Pat Stewart's gleefully evil Wicked Witch, while Kelly Pearson as Dorothy had a pleasantly natural voice and an appealing air of friendly bewilderment. She was assisted by a charming, well-trained penetrance, who seemed to take no offence at being told about in a small basket and wearing an enormous pink bow. Her three companions were less happy about the singing — the mouse seemed unashamedly pitched — but they made up for it by getting into the character of the Lion, Scarecrow and Tin Man admirably.

It was clear that direction, choreography and design were of greater than usual importance here — working with an ad hoc company of experienced and well-trained players, and presenting a "spectacular" on a very small stage. It was an impressive achievement.



Milton Miller's *Servant Of Two Masters*.



W.A.

Spectacular triumph

EQUUS

by **Cliff Gilling**

Report by Peter Shaffer. Pit Theatre is associated with the Park Stage Company. Opened January 1982 director, David Addenbrooke. Cast: Bryan, Brian Jones, Alan, Simon Woodford (Pretoria).

The Pit Theatre group has, since its inception as an amateur workshop group and self-help theatre company in 1975, demonstrated an energy and persistence, and a determination to aim high, which has distinguished it among Perth's "little" theatres. Past productions have included plays by Shakespeare, Pinter and Stoppard, unusual and ambitious choices for a group working with minimal resources in a suburban context, and it has to be said that the gap between aspiration and product has on occasion been yawning. But with their current production of Peter Shaffer's *Equus*, a play last assuming "modern classic" status, the Pit Theatre has come of age. I have rarely before seen any amateur group give so polished a performance of a challenging work.

Much of the credit must be given, of course, to David Addenbrooke who persisted as director for this production. Addenbrooke's past experience with professional companies, and as a developer of talent within formal drama courses at WAIT no doubt contributed much to the degree of skilful and intelligent playing he was able to elicit from a cast including many genuine novices, but crisp and sensitive direction alone cannot make a silk purse from a sow's ear. One must have talent on which to build, and here Addenbrooke was particularly fortunate in having two very talented actors in the central roles of Martin Dysart, the ambivalent psychiatrist/sexman, and Alan Strang, (the disturbed adolescent whose blinding of six horses is the trigger for the play's action).

As Dysart, Pit founder and Artistic Director Brian Jones gave a studied and thoughtful performance. His restrained skill brought an authority to the role which is had lacked in previous productions I have seen, and which was able to accommodate a tendency to extremity of emotionalism in his interpretation of the character. As Alan Strang, Simon Woodford gave a performance which stamps him, young as he is, as an actor of great talent and presence. In

was gut-wrenchingly authentic playing, without ever becoming indulgent or undisciplined.

These two were supported by a cast in which the level of performance was uniformly high. Addenbrooke cast the play extremely well and supporting players like Les Mendelsohn and Peter Scardon (as Alan's parents) and Maureen van der Heyden (as the stable girl, Jill Martin) reassured, in the moments of the play's focus upon them, the production's overall power and finance.

Mention should also be made of Brian Jones' direction of movement and choreography — the basic/more who are so central to this play's stage imagery were, in their stylised grace, a feature of this production clearly superior to the (professional) Playhouse production of 1979. Indeed, the Pit production was in every respect at least the equal of that production and can therefore be counted, given the limitations under which the company works, a spectacular triumph for all concerned.



Alan Strang (Nervet), Simon Woodford (Alan) and Maureen van der Heyden (Jill) in Pit Theatre's *Equus*.

Theatre Guide

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL

MAGPIE (51 5151)

Theatre 42: **The Cucumber King** by John Lonsie director Malcolm Moore musical composer Glen Heinrich designer, Ken Wilby: A topsy-turvy household with the arrival of King Kums and his subjects demanding political asylum. March 5-19

PLAYBOX (51 5121)

Troupe Theatre: **The Curse Of The Starving Class** and **Buried Child** by Sam Shepard director Roger Pulvers In repertory. March 8-20

STAGE COMPANY (223 5283)

Arts Theatre: **Percy and Rose** by Rob George director John Noble designer, Bruce McRendry with Dennis Olsen and Daphne Gray March 10-20

STATE THEATRE COMPANY (51 5151)

Playhouse: **Signal Driver** by Patrick White director Neil Armfield: A chamber play for four actors in which a husband and wife are viewed through youth, middle and old age at the unlikely setting of a bus/tan shelter surrounded by the post-war aftermath of the ever-emerging city. March 5, 8, 15-20

SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY (51 5121)

Opera Theatre: **A Map Of The World**

by David Hare director David Hare with Robert Grubb and Roshan Seth Set against the background of a UNESCO conference in India. The play centres on a confrontation between an Indian intellectual and a young British journalist. March 5-17

FESTIVAL FRINGE

THE ACTING COMPANY (274 2251 ext 270)

What The World Needs by Sue Rider director Sue Rider: A fast moving entertaining and non-partisan look at the game of politics. Riverland tour, starts March 15. Touring metropolitan schools. March 8-12 **Space Movers** by Sue Rider and Nick Gail director, Sue Rider: Riverland tour, starts March 15

ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY

FOOTLIGHTS CLUBS The Little Theatre: **Cheap Mucky Teash** March 9-13

CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE

AMP Theatre: **Treatment**. This play explores the lives and problems of three institutionalised handicapped children. March 10-12

CHILDRENS AREAN THEATRE

Up Stage: **Boots Y' All - A Pecky Footstep**: A look at sport in our society. March 15-19

CIRCUS OZ

Phonax Park Trotting Ground, Port Pirie: presented by the Arts Council Of SA. A family show with all the traditional acts of the circus, together with rock band and some of

Australia's leading cabaret performers. March 24-27 **ELIZABETH PATERSON** State Art Gallery: **The 9 to 5s**, **The Merry-Go-Round Person** and **The Old Woman At The Window**. March 8-13

HOLE IN THE WALL THEATRE

Price Theatre: **My Name Is Pablo Picasso** by Mary Gage, with Edgar Metcalfe as Picasso. March 8-13

HOME COOKING THEATRE COMPANY

The Stables: **Carlew Arts Centre I am Who You Later** directed by Meredith Rogers and Barbara Golewski. March 2-7, 10-13, 18-20

LA NAMA THEATRE

Under Milkwood by Dylan Thomas March 8-20

O THEATRE

Genial and Cive Live. March 5, 6, 12, 23, 29, 30

Pride and Prejudice. March 18, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27

The Typists. March 5, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19

SALAMANCA THEATRE COMPANY

AMP Theatre: **Anne's Coming Out** devised by Richard Dawy. March 15-19 **The Forests Of The Night** by David Allen March 17-19 **Woodcock** by Les Winspear. March 18

WEST COMMUNITY THEATRE

Park Community Centre

Xenophobia: High energy rock musical. March 8-20

For further contact The Association of Community Theatres on 257 5358

ACT

ANU ARTS CENTRE (43 4787)

Manorchester Theatre Of Australia presents **General MacArthur in Australia** by Roger Fulford, with puppets by Richard Bradshaw. Evenings March 3-13 **Smiles Away**, a puppet play for children, daytime performances. March 5-13

CANBERRA THEATRE (43 7500)

The Black Theatre of Prague in **A Week Of Dreams**. March 1-6. Piccolo Teatro di Milano in **Harlequins and The Others**. March 9-13

CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE TROUPE

Treatment: a group devised piece about mentally handicapped young people. Presented by a senior group from Youth Theatre under the direction of Gail Kelly. In schools throughout March

PLAYHOUSE (49 6485)

On Our Selection by Bert Bailey (Theatre ACT — Fortune Theatre Company) Classic comedy adapted and directed by George Whaley, with John Derrum, John Hamilton and Michael Boddy. To March 13

TEMPO THEATRE

Cole, a musical based on the life and music of Cole Porter. Theatre Three. March 5-27

THEATRE ACT (49 6485)

Enslin by Ron Elsha director Michael Boddy, with George Whaley and John Derrum. Starts March 20. For address contact Janet Healey on 49 4789

NSW

ENSEMBLE THEATRE (929 8877)

Black Ball Game by Don Webb director Don Reid designer Warren Field, with Michael Ross. Don

Swonell, Ted Williams, Lorne Stewart, Harold Jones and Ron Black. To March 13

GRIFFIN THEATRE COMPANY

(33 2857)

Stables Theatre: **Mass** by Ron Blair director, Peter Kingston. To March 21

HUNTER VALLEY THEATRE COMPANY (49528 2526)

Playhouse: **Big River** by Alex Buzo director Aarne Neeme designer Brian Nickless with Julie McGregor and Vic Rooney. March 5-27

KIRRIBILLIPUB THEATRE (92 3415)

The Buccaneer Show by Ken Matthews and Steve Johnson, with original music by Adrian Morgan producer Bill Young with Zoe Bertram, Paul Bertram, Allen Chapple, Marge McCose and Tony Martin. Throughout March

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE

(212 3411)

They're Playing Our Song by Neil Simon director Phil Cusack, with

Jacki Weaver and John Walcott
Throughout March

MARIAN STREET THEATRE
(0983 3158)

What The Butler Saw by Joe Orton,
director, John Mladen, with Ron
Fraser, Joan Bruce, Reg Giffen
To March 13

MUSIC LOFT THEATRE (077 6886)

Have A Ball devised by Peggy
Mortimer, director, Peggy Mortimer,
with Enzo Toppino, Dean Toppino,
Gerry Gallagher, Janet Brown and
Peggy Mortimer, Throughout March

NIMROD THEATRE (899 5003)

Upstairs, Welcome The Bright World
by Stephen Sewall, director, Neil
Armfield, designer, Emma D'Arcy,
with Cathy Downes, Michele Furdjon,
Russell Newman, Barry Otto, Katrina
Foster, Max Gilson and Martin Hains
To March 13

The Suicide by Nicholas Erdman,
director, Aubrey Mellor, designer,
Richard Roberts, with Peter Gierol,
Angela Punch-McGregor and Carole
Skinner, Starts March 24

Downstairs, Female Parts by Francis
Rame, director, Faye Mactadow, with
Lynette Curran and Jude Kuring, To
March 28

NSW THEATRE OF THE DEAF
(257 1200)

Theodora for primary schools and **The
Deaf Man in History** for secondary
schools, director, Ian Watson,
Throughout March

PHILLIP STREET THEATRE
(232 4570)

The Anniversary by Bill McIlwraith,
director, Peter Williams, with June
Salter and John Hamblin, Starts
March 18

REGENT THEATRE (264 7588)

Barnum by Cy Coleman, Michael
Stewart and Mark Bramble, director,
Bazook Lee, musical director, Noel
Smith, with Reg Livermore, Starts
March 3

RIVERINA TRUCKING COMPANY
(089/25 2052)

Enrol Flynn's Great Big Adventure
Book For Boys by Rob George,
director, Colin Schumacher, musical
director, Tom Webb, designer, Colin
Mitchell, with David Wilson, Joanne
Campbell, Tania Urquhart and Kevin
Cox, Blindy cabaret which celebrates
the great adventure of Enrol Flynn's
life, Wagga Wagga Leagues Club to
March 7 at 8pm

SEYMOUR CENTRE (892 6886)

York Theatre: Earleen by Ron Ebbs,
director, Bruce Myles, with Frederick
Parlow, Gary Down and Roger
Oakley, Into March
Piccolo Teatro di Milano's production
of *Amlethino* aka *Amleth* with Ferruccio

Solani starts March 15

**Downstairs, The Good Person of
Szechuan** by Bertolt Brecht, director,
Mark Radwin, A Seymour Student
Theatre production, March 3-27

**SHOPFRONT THEATRE FOR
YOUNG PEOPLE (588 3948)**

Weekend workshops include
playbuilding, mime, dance, puppetry,
design, radio and video, Youth
Theatre Showcase, **Overgrown** play
built by the company, director, Earl
Bray and Don Munro, March 12, 13,
19, 20, 26 and 27

STUDIO SYDNEY (771 3333)

People Are Living There by Athol
Fugard, director, Graham Correy, with
Lella Blake, Frank Brennan and
Richard Evans, Starts March 11
SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY
(231 8111)

Theatre Royal: Chicago by Fred Ebb
and Bob Fosse, director, Richard
Wherrett, musical director, Peter
Casey, with Nancey Hayes, Geraldine
Turner, Terry Cosovan, Judi Connell,
George Spartz and J P Webster, To
March 27

THEATRE SOUTH (042/28 2923)

**Wollongong Tech Theatre: We Can't
Pay! We Won't Pay!** by Dano Fo,
director, Des Davis, Throughout
March

For reviews contact Carole Long on
909 2010/357 1299

NT

**ARTS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA (NT
DIVISION) (31 5283)**

Spare Parts Puppet Arts Theatre
school and pub-show, touring
throughout the Territory, To March
12

DARWIN THEATRE GROUP
(81/0424)

Brown's Mart: Cloud Nine by Caryl
Churchill, director, Ric Blighhurst,
Starts March 11

TIE-DIE (86 0287)

Four D's A Kiss by Simon Hopkinson,
director, Tony Soszynski, Touring
Darwin secondary schools throughout
March

For reviews contact Tim Gow on
81 8824

QLD

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE
(321 2777)

The Rocky Horror Show on Tour
Revival of the cult show that began it
all, Starts March 24

LA BOITE THEATRE (38 1822)

Back To The Circus, director,

Graeme Jenson, Group-devised
vaudeville show in the style of
Brisbane's old Grandmothers Theatre, To
March 6

Hell And Hay by Richard
Ffrenchham, director, Robert
Kingham, Ironic look at the plight of
Jewish internees in Australia during
the 2nd World War, Starts March 18
QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY
(321 3881)

**SGIO Theatre: A Long Day's Journey
Into Night** by Eugene O'Neill, director,
Alan Edwards, O'Neill's semi-
autobiographical masterpiece
Tragedy of a family at war with itself
and its past, Starts March 16

THE TN COMPANY (352 5133)
**Twelfth Night Theatre: Romeo and
Juliet** by William Shakespeare,
director, Bryan Nelson, Shakespeare's
perennially popular story of star
crossed love, To March 18
For reviews contact Jeremy Redman
on 377 2512

TAS

POLYDUS THEATRE COMPANY
(34 8018)

Auntie Mame by Jerome Lawrence
and Robert E Lee, director, Don Gay
The play follows the life of a wealthy
New York socialite from 1925, through
the Depression and into the 1940s
Toured by Tasmanian Theatre
Company to Theatre Royal, Hobart to
March 6, Civic Centre, Burnie March
12-13, Princess Theatre, Launceston
March 26-27

SALAMANCA THEATRE COMPANY
(23 5259)

The Forest Of The Night by David
Allen, director, Margaret Davis, A play
based in south west Tasmania on
search for Tasmanian Tiger its effect
on development interests in area and
personal relationships of people
concerned, Also performances of
Anna's Coming Out and *Les
Wingspreads* Wood Song, Touring
Hobart schools throughout March
TASMANIAN THEATRE COMPANY
(34 6932)

**Theatre Royal, Hobart: The Black
Theatre of Prague's production of A
Week of Days**, director, Jim Smac
Using the Black Theatre technique
this is an evening of fantasy and
magic, March 8-13, 8pm

**Tell Tale Heart and The Fall of the
House of Usher** adapted by Stephen
Berkoft from Edgar Allan Poe stories,
director, Stephen Berkoft, with
Stephen Berkoft, Terence McGinley,
Annie Steiner and John Prior, Total
and intense theatre from London
Theatre Group - a startling amalgam
of acting, mime, music and lighting

Princess Theatre, Launceston March 18-27 Theatre Royal Hobart March 18-27
For address contact Jon Fogarty on 30 8022

VIC

ARENA THEATRE (245 1837)

Boots in 'A' divided by the Arena Theatre Group for secondary students 9-12 Director: Peter Charlton Comedy focusing on that "Victorian obsession", footfall Touring throughout March
AUSTRALIAN NOUVEAU THEATRE (889 3253)

Artificial Downstairs by Michel Deusch director, Marc Adam Drawing upon the madness of the German playwright Lenz who purportedly ate himself to death in the Moscow gutter To March 13
With Strength And Delicacy written and performed by Nobby and Lyny Two women whose exploring feminine Australian reality from the 50s to the 80s March 3-5

Downstairs *Harriet Machine* by Hanser Muller director, Jeanne Mignon Starts March 24
BANANA LOUNGE COMEDY ROOM BYO (419 2885)

Sid *High Speed Night On The Town* a comedy with Michael Bishop, Rob Meadows and Robin Giles Throughout March

BATMAN AVE BIG TOP (854 2494)

Sesame Street with all 26 singing and dancing characters directed and choreographed by Robina Beard To March 21

COMEDY CAFE BYO THEATRE (419 2693)

Bus, Son Of Tram with Rod Wuanstock, Mary Kennedy, Geoff Brookes and Steven Blackburn Throughout March
FLYING TRAPEZE CAFE (417 3737)

Tony Richards, Patcho The Clown and Cabaret Singers Throughout March
HANDSPAN THEATRE COMPANY (41 5378)

Judy Malone and the Nine O'Clock Tiger Adelaide Festival Fringe, AMP Theatre, March 10-18 **Berry Of Berkeley's Creek**, touring schools March 1-18

LA MAMA (347 8085)

Ramona And The White Slaves by George F Walker A black comedy March 3-7 **A Death In The Family** by Colin Ryan, director, David Wilkes March 11-28

LAST LAUGH THEATRE

RESTAURANT (419 6228)

International Comedy Festival continues **White Family** (Melb) with Captain Rock To March 6 Julian

Chaplin (UK) March 8-20 The Comic Strip (UK) Starts March 22

LE JOKE (419 8226)

Polpot of new generation of comedy talent from all over Australia Tues-Sat

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY (854 4000)

Athenaeum Theatre **Maria Von Barnheim** by Gotthold Lessing adapted and directed by Ray Lawler Popular comedy from German classical repertoire
Russell Street Theatre **Virginia** by Edna O'Brien, director, Judith Alexander The lives and writing of Virginia and Leonard Woolf Throughout March

Athenaeum 2 **Narrow Point** by David Knight, directed and designed by Bruce Mylne Throughout March
MILL THEATRE COMPANY (852/32 3316)

Regular workshops for special interest groups including Geelong Prison handicapped disabled and unemployed groups **Mill Night** for everyone Thurs 7.30pm **Mill Club** for children Sat 9.30am

MURRAY RIVER PERFORMING GROUP (960/21 7615)

Liquid Amber by Jack Hibbard director Richard Meredith Theatre restaurant style Come to the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Jack and Ruby To March 27 **Clown Troup** Appearing at Moomba and at Adelaide Fringe Festival **They'll Tell You About Me** devised and performed by Robert Ferner director Peter Brown **Paul Fly Circus** workshops throughout March

MUSHROOM TROUPE (241 7133)

Bombora written and directed by Alison Richards, designer Kenneth Evans Performed in conjunction with Handspan Theatre Alexander Theatre, March 13-20 School hour performances March 15-18 Ringwood Cultural Centre, March 22-25 Frankston Teachers College Starts March 25

PLAYBOX THEATRE COMPANY (83 4800)

National Theatre **The Fall Of The House Of Usher** written and performed by Stephen Berkoff and The London Theatre Group and **Tell Tale Heart** To March 13 **Upstairs Playbox** **Lovely Lenny** Lower written and directed by Barry Dickes with Dennis Moore To March 21

Downstairs Playbox **The Curse Of The Starving Class** and **Burned Child** by Sam Shepard director Roger Pulvers designer Peter Corrigan Fresh from Adelaide Festival

Alternate nights refer to newspapers
THEATREWORKS (928 8444)
Storming Mount Albert By Tram from the prize-winning story by Paul Davies director Mark Savetta In association with Moomba Festival To March 14

WEST (370 7034)

Final Simon director, Jan MacDonald One Man show with Phil Sumner Performances in schools, football clubs, social clubs and community venues Starts March 15 **Whalever Snaps** by resident clowns Performances at Moomba, schools and community venues Starts March 25

For entries contact Connie Kramer on 861 9448 or Susan Trotter on 531 4422

WA

BENT PIN PRODUCTIONS (335 3482)

Couples by Mandy Brown and Murray Oliver TIE Two young people explore role-playing and human relations while waiting at a bus stop each day director Ken Kales Touring schools throughout March Public performances PFT March 19-20 and 28-27

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (321 5268)

WA Opera Studio The Swan River Stage Company in association with The Goethe Institute present **Max and Moritz** by Volker Ludwig adapted by Andrew Ross A play for children with familiar themes, very theatrical and very funny March 1-5 8-12 at 10am and 12-4pm

HOLE IN THE WALL THEATRE (381 3400)

Cloud Nine by Caryl Churchill and **My Name Is Pablo Picasso** by Mary Sage To March 5

PLAYHOUSE (335 3586)

National Theatre Company **Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf** by Edward Albee director Rodney Fisher with Robyn Neven and Warren Mitchell Starts March 23

Fields Of Heaven by Dorothy Hewitt, director Rodney Fisher Hewitt's latest play, commissioned by the National about romance and trauma in the wheatbelt To March 5

REGAL (381 1887)

Intertier and Michael Elliot by arrangement with Michael Codrins present **House Guest** by Francis Quarbridge director Val May set designer, Gerie Benedetti Starts March 22
For address contact Margaret Schwan on 347 1778

COHAN ON
CULTIVATING DANCERS

"Unless you have a place where artists can express freely, you won't have a company. You will just be running a business," says Robert Cohan, Artistic Director of the London Contemporary Dance Theatre, on his way through Sydney to New Zealand to direct the first Quebequean choreographic course in this part of the world.

His conversation was peppered with such pertinent remarks, not delivered in any tone as a lecture but simply observations arising from his experience in running a close-knit company of dancers for just on 15 years. He went to London from America in a modern dance evangelist, bringing his skill as a Martha Graham dancer, but set on a policy of developing British dancers and choreographers. "What is the point of a British company doing American choreographers' ideas of dance?"

Starting with a school in the company's base, he was soon in the position of using only members of his own group to choreograph — mainly Robert North, Stephen Davies, Richard Ainslie and himself. But in the past few years — "We are now on our second wave" — the company has been looking outside for creative input, and going through a few changes that may provide an example for companies anywhere in the world.

"With 21 people in the company, we have a very flexible management. We spend six months of the year performing in large venues, such as the Sadlers Wells Theatre in London. Then we might split the company in two, preparing the same program at the same time with both groups, but performing in different theatres — smaller venues for five or six hundred people at universities and cultural centres.

"Alternatively, we work with a smaller company — 12 to 16 dancers — while others are teaching or going off on their own. The dancers have substantial shifts of up to three months every three years. They work very hard, and I know from my own experience that you can only do it for so many months, and then you go crazy. You have to go to another company or school — or not go at all."

The flexibility makes "an awful amount of administration", but it does appear to be a way to refresh the dancers and sharpen their creativity without losing their commitment — though when the artistic directorship of Ballet Rambert was offered to Robert North last year, there was, of course, no stopping him.

The school, which was set up in 1966 and

prelude to forming the London Contemporary Dance Theatre, has expanded into nine studios and a theatre. In his 150 full-time students and about 600 people a week passing through it in the variety of classes it offers. At the moment, it is seeking validation of the BA Honours degree course it plans to offer in affiliation with the University of Kent.

"I have always felt that it was unfair to intelligent, talented dancers that they could not have a degree and be professional at the same time. The problem has been to do the practical work necessary, and the academic work. We have managed to devise a course that balances the two — and by cultivating yourself in aesthetics and other areas of the arts, you cannot help but contribute more to the whole concept of dance as a performing art."

"Dance has been a poor relation to the changing aspects of teaching that have appeared in the last 20 years. There has

been weight by rote, sometimes by brilliant teachers who can give you a bit more — but I don't think it has been taught well. The dancer's study has always been a thing apart from what happens in the rest of society. Society has changed. You can't go on teaching the same way — people won't move. The whole being of the dancer is not being cultured, only the body."

He advocates the introduction of academic subjects into classes. For example, the teaching of anatomy to the dancers — who know their bodies better than any university anatomist — are using the muscles in question. "That would change the whole shape of dance teaching. Relating specific work to the actual life of the students will help them learn quicker because they are bringing more of themselves to the learning process."

COE AT SYDNEY DANCE

Meanwhile, the Australian Ballet's greatest performing loss in 1981, Robert Coe, has been working enthusiastically with the Sydney Dance Company. Graham Murphy made him a focal point in *Howland*, his new ballet for the company's first program of their 1982 season in the Sydney Opera House.

SUCCESSFUL COURSES

The intensive two-week choreographic course which Robert Cohan deemed to Auckland appears to have been a great success. Speaking to three of the last Australians who attended — Garry Lester, Wendy Butterworth and Beth Shotton — I heard nothing but praise for the opportunity they were given to work out their ideas with participating composers and directors.

Naturally, there were the usual hours of drama and despair associated with such concentrated creative effort. But the focus on the choreographic process and its refinement, without interference in the individual choreographer's style or ideas, seems to have given the artists that the course was designed for.

The fourth Australian choreographer was Helen Herbertson, and the two New Zealanders were Mary Jane O'Reilly, director of Limbo, and Peter Boyce, ballet master of the NZ Ballet.

The Royal Academy of Dancing summer school for dancers in Melbourne appears to have met with similar success over its three weeks. It had a high-powered team of instructors flown in from England, some of them well-known from their Royal Ballet performing days. Ronald Barker, Marjorie Lane, Anne Horton, Brenda Lau, Jala Farrow and Eileen Ward, who has already



Robert Coe at the Sydney Dance Co.

made her mark as dancer in this country through her time spent teaching with the Australian Ballet.

Both summer schools are expected to be separated every two years, possibly adjusting the time span initially so that they take place on alternate years.

WHITLAM AND PAVLOVA

Margaret Whitlam, wife of the former Prime Minister, revealed a little-known aspect of her life as a performer when she presented the 1981 Sydney Opera House Award to the Sydney Theatre Company. Recalling her earliest memories of theatre-going, she told a rapt audience how, as a very young ballet student, she was taken by her mother to see Pavlova perform. "I embarrassed my mother terribly. At one point — when Pavlova must have been doing something very simple — I got up out of my seat and announced, 'I can do that!'"

JONES LEAVES AB HOTSEAT

The search for an artistic director for the Australian Ballet is on again after Marilyn Jones's announcement that she would not take up the option of her contract for 1983. Her decision did not come as a surprise to those who observed her increasing uneasiness in coping with a job for which she was not as well suited or prepared as she had been in her mercenary dancing career. It is for her magical quality as a dancer that more people will remember her.

Let's hope that the selectors this time around will find an artistic director whose experience has shaped him or her to meet the demands of this arduous job, and that a strong team spirit can be built up between artistic and management staff. This will probably depend on the recommendations of the management consultant team employed by the company to look into its structure after the dancers' strike last year. Until these are known and implemented, it would be hard to ask anyone to take on the job.

OFF AGAIN, ON AGAIN

Early had the beautifully designed and printed colour brochures for the Australian Ballet's 1982 Sydney season arrived, then word went out that one of the programs had been changed. Back to one of its amazing poems, *Gina Tetley's Ave Of Spring*. This had been part of an earlier show — a Sonowakey contemporary tribute. But "problems with the music" (that is, the cost of performing rights) put a stop to that, and Tetley's *Daphne* and *Clio* was substituted. In turn, "design problems" put that out of the running, and suddenly the "music problems" were solved. *Ave* is back on the program, with a selection of divertissements to help Victoria Negredo's *One Woman* fill out the time.

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AN ABSOLUTE OBSESSION

Lindsay Kemp and the Dance

by Jill Sykes

Lindsay Duncan often springs up in Lindsay Kemp's conversations. It's not surprising, since her idiosyncratic ideas of dance have parallels with his, several generations later. Encapsulated, they revolve around the determination to ignore established concepts of what dance is, and isn't — to present it as an unfiltered expression of life and love.

"I started dancing like everyone else — in other words, as children do," says Lindsay Kemp. "That wonderful first dance is one that I have fought to retain. Everyone tried to make me conform, to abandon that dance. Instead, I have devoted my life to perfecting that dance."

"From the beginning, I tried to invent my own steps. Then I was sent to learn tap dancing at the age of two. I was considered very cute, very talented — very amusing, in fact. By the time I was eight, dancing was an absolute obsession. I ate it and slept it."

That was the age, he recalls, that he acted out Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for his fellow pupils at school. He was, he says, "quite nude" and confidently in command of all the roles. The presentation was promptly banned by his school, in which "drama was severely discouraged" — thereby giving him his first taste of controversy as a key to publicity.

It was a lesson well learned, as those who remember his first tour of Australia with *Flowers* will know. Had it not been for the defenders of moral purity protesting against nudity and



Lindsay Kemp.

sexuality on stage, coupled with some realisations of sordid reality after the writings of Jean Genet, not nearly so many people would have discovered the theatrical magic that Kemp can create.

Even now, seven years later, the start of his current Australian tour in Brisbane filled that city's newspaper columns with shock-horror and brought a couple of members from the Force into the audience on opening night. Threats of arrest, however, came to nothing.

Genuine outrage is just as likely to be expressed by people in performing art circles who don't pigeon-hole the

Kemp style neatly, or by dance purists who object to his description of his company members as dancers when some of them patently aren't, and when sung and spoken words can be as much a part of the action as movement.

"We dance with everything," says Kemp. "With the voice and the eyes and the hands. . . There are no books about any kind of dance. That is the hardest thing. It is true dance. It is the dance of the human spirit. In what I teach and what I direct, I encourage people to release their feelings through their fingertips."

In other words, Kemp creates largely by instinct, drawing from the pooled

resources of his experience — his memories perhaps a little larger than life with the passing of the years, but all the more vivid for that. It seems valid, then, to return to his youth in England where his teenage years formed his ability to entrance an audience. He takes up the tale:

"My mother sent me off to boarding school, to a naval college, and it was there that I developed my power to hypnotise people, to put them under a spell. At this very tough school, I had to entice them to survive — like *Schindler's List*. That meant I built up this wonderful repertoire — it is where *Salomé* began. I remember being nailed with yards and yards and yards of lavatory paper. . ."

Extra-curricular activities apart, naval college was obviously not the place for the young Lindsay Kemp, so he left to go to art school in his home town of Bradford. One of his fellow pupils was David Hockney, who took him to see the Sadlers Wells Theatre Ballet where Kenneth MacMillan's *Dances Composites* and Ninette de Valois' *Roller Program* were on the program.

The effect was immediate. "I decided that was what I was going to do, and that was that." Dance as a career had crossed his mind before, and after shaking off to secret ballet lessons he had auditioned for Ninette de Valois on one of her sweeps around the nation in search of talent. Her letter of refusal, declaring him "temperamentally and physically unsuited to a career in dance" had put him off.

This time, there was no stopping him. He set off for London and the Ballet Rambert, where he didn't last long. His theatrical dreams were filled with little girls in cream chiffon and the bald head of Robert Helpmann in the title role of *The Roller Program*. "I used to wear one of my mother's stockings over my head — and then later I shaved my head completely bald."

One way and another, he managed to make a living out of performing. His work ranged from the critique — *Lines to the Teoposchorean Marvel* in a strip show — to the educational, touring schools as a member of the Paul Mims, a group that got its name from its director, Beryl Paul.

The adventures that befell him in the divergent aspects of his career would fill a book. In fact, he is working on one



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at the moment, a mingling of anecdotes and performance notes with autobiographical details. On the professional side, these have become increasingly impressive since he was last in Australia, as his company has toured in Holland, Canada, Venezuela, Switzerland, Belgium, Mexico, Spain and Italy. His greatest triumph, he says, was the conquering of Paris at the Theatre de la Ville.

Over these years, he thinks he has become more analytical of his work. He has also been inspired by the single-minded discipline of the dancers of the Ballet Rambert, for whom he created two dance works in the seventies, *The Parade Goes By* and *Cross Garden*. But

even as he muses on his intentions to work himself and his company harder and in a more disciplined fashion, he decides that exercises are essential for the blossoming of his creativity. He's probably right.

The people he has in his company today seem to have stronger technical backgrounds than in the past — Francis Terevy, for instance, used to be with Bejart — but his cooperation with classically trained dancers hasn't lessened. "It is not the style, it's the mannerisms. It's the precision of the fingerings, the narrowness of the range of expressions — either their eyes are up to the heavens and their eyebrows

and together, or they are wearing the smile of the Austrias, that toothy grin."

This time around, Australian audiences are being treated to the return of *Plumier* and a newer work, *The Dances*, which is evolving gradually in typical Kemp style from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. They finish their Sydney season on March 13, moving on to Newcastle on March 16 and Adelaide from March 26 to April 6.

After that, it's back to Europe for their umpteenth tour of Italy and their first of Scandinavia. It's not like last time, when the company stayed and stayed. These days, they are much in demand.

Choreographic confusions and clarity

by Bill Sheubridge

Don Asker's Human Vess Dance Company has been performing for over two years now, they've generated enough interest to be able to occupy several big-city seasons, a committed schedule of Canberra performances (their home base) and an extended tour of New Zealand.

This is an impressive track record for two seasons, firstly because this relatively new company is so small and secondly because it is devoted entirely to the out look, output and choreographic/dramatic concerns of one man, Asker.

Such a group is a common occurrence in a place like New York where there is a myriad of groups formed and nurtured under the light of one source, but in almost no other place have they occurred here in Australia.

Certainly Human Vess has managed to attract quite a colorful audience for itself so far, but some will tell if the cult will remain such, or develop into a larger audience appreciative of its style attitude and aesthetic aims.

The latest work to be seen in Sydney, the

full length, *The End Of A Dream* had a strange and unimagined sort of audience the night I was there. Word had got about that the work was an attempted mosaic of post modern dance and "straight" vocal theatre, as such there was an element of derring-do in some viewers who apparently weren't used to coming to dance performances and were intrigued by the attempt. The fact that they were more bewildered than enlightened (as were the "dance" crowd) is an indication of the weaknesses of the work itself, apart from the path of incomprehension between the two theatrical styles.

In their purely aspects dance and the spoken word make their communications to us in two different ways, speech is linear, allowing us to follow a line of argument, a progression of ideas, while dance is divergent, a momentary illustration in space and time that catches its sense through any number of interpretations.

What *End Of A Dream* fails to take into account is this basic difference, the two styles are like oil and water throughout the work, both forms are used but neither works in a dramatically synchronised way.

Taken as three distinct parts of a mosaic, *End Of A Dream* has a long going first element of statement and expression, taken as a full length, continuous narrative, dragging its weary strands of thought from one act to the next, the work would need radical adjustments and clarification.

The dancers themselves, while directed to

the school of Asker, could do far more themselves in getting the point across. They are, at best, stuck between the two words of word and gesture. A good vocal coach wouldn't go amiss, while a more highly developed ability to manipulate emotion and thought in the quality of their choreographic attack is something we could all look forward to.

As to the last concern of the Human Vess Company, I thought while watching Ramischandra's evening of classical Indian (Odissi) Temple dancing, that Asker's dancers could do a lot worse than learn from such an ancient style.

Although the structure and form of such dancing may initially seem too rigid and somewhat disciplined, it is the wealth of personal detail and private style that makes it rough, expressive and engaging.

"Temple" dancing is not a stiff routine learned by rote, and as classical ballet is not "rehearsed" or "outlined" in its sense adherence to principle it is "rehearsed" only to a restricted mind, be it the choreographer's or the beholder's.

No doubt our understanding of the concepts and forms of Odissi dance was greatly aided by a thoughtful spoken and visual explanation of each dance before it was performed, but in the final analysis it was the choreographic clarity of action and wealth of personal detail that Ramischandra (not Ramu Ibrahim, as Sydney Dance Company) brought to his performance that made it so illuminating and communicative.

-GUIDE

NSW

SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY

continues its opening 1982 program. **New Additions I**, in the Opera House Drama Theatre (20588) with new works by Graeme Murphy, Andris Topka, Carl Mowse. **New Additions II** opens March 10 in the Opera Theatre with a second Murphy work and new ballets by Graeme Watson and Barry Morgan.

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET starts to catch up on its postponed 1981 subscription performances of **Swan Lake** — this time in the Concert Hall, a first for a full-length classical ballet production. March 18-23. The Australian Ballet will open its 1982 subscription season with a triple bill in the Opera Theatre: Glen Tetley's **Role of Spring**, Vicente Nebraska's **Our**

Waltzes, and divertissements. From March 28.

LINDSAY KEMP AND COMPANY

continue their season at the Capitol Theatre (212 3455) with **Deane**, his fantasy version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, opening March 2, moving to the Civic Theatre Newcastle (2 1977) March 16-20.

TAS

TASMANIAN DANCE COMPANY

(31 6878) will present its specially devised program of modern dance works in primary and secondary schools in Hobart and Launceston.

VIC

AUSTRALIAN DANCE THEATRE

brings its new full-length work to

National Theatre St Kilda (524 0321) after SA premiere season, as above. From March 25.

THEATRE OF PINA BAUSCH will also move on from Adelaide at Melbourne's Palace Theatre (524 0651) with 1982 her early and sad review on lost innocence. March 22 then 24-27. **HUMAN VEINS DANCE THEATRE** presents Don Asker's new full-length work *The End Of A Dream*, a bee although in setting an individual style for the company. Universal Theatre (419 3777) March 15-31.

WA

WA BALLET COMPANY at the Majesty's Theatre (321 6288) will present a season of Petipa's **Raymonda**, condensed by Garth Welch into a one act version. Ray Powell's amusing old-timer **On the**

Five, Barry Moreland's beautiful, neo-classical *Spirals*, *Paradise Gardens*, a pas de deux by Walter Bourke to music of Rina Shankar *Images*, a contemporary classical work by Garth Welch to Bachmaninov's variations on a theme by Paganini. Starts March 17.

SA

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL

THEATRE OF
RINA BAUSCH an

Adelaide Festival presentation (51 0121) provides a series of extraordinary dance-based theatrical experiences. *Kantusaid*, Thebarton Town Hall, March 7, 9, 12, 13.

Bluebeard, Festival Theatre, March 11, 16, 17, 1988; Opera Theatre, March 19, 20.

AUSTRALIAN DANCE THEATRE Playhouse (51 5151) will show a new full-length work by Jonathan Taylor *While We Watched* to a musical score devised by Ray Cook from compositions by Stravinsky, Rachmaninov, Bernstein and others. March 9-13.

Fatal Johnny, Royalty Theatre (223 3765) is a fine farce by Annette Raylor for Mummy & Little Darlings and A/D, a combination which produced the much acclaimed *Patty Children*. Presented by young performers for school and family audiences. Melbourne March 13 and 20. **ADELAIDE'S FESTIVAL FRINGE** for 1982 includes eight dance events of a variety of venues and times. Among them are **ONE EXTRA DANCE THEATRE** with excerpts from *The Cheated* and *Two Women*, *Family Portrait*, *Eggs on Toast*, at the Prince Theatre; **DANCE MACHINE DE PARIS** and **CANBERRA DANCE ENSEMBLE** at the Balcony Theatre; the up-and-coming **ENERGY CONNECTION** at Union Hall; **AUSTRALIAN**

ABORIGINES, Woomera, Museum Forecourt, North Terrace. Full details Fringe program (223 4360).

LINDSAY KEMP and Company begin their season of his fantastic versions of *Flowers* of the Opera Theatre (51 6171) on March 26.



Kemp's version of *The Devils*



The AB's Joanne Michel

PROBLEMS OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY

The Year Of Living Dangerously has been having an awful time of it, not the least of its troubles being the difficulties of casting the role of a Chinese-Australian dentist who in the Christopher Koch novel is the infatuated, adventurous lover for the journalist who is the more-or-less hero, the role taken by Mel Gibson. But the financial hurdles at least appear to have been conquered with MGM landing Peter Jackson as the American across Signature Warner, of *Alive* and *Excalibur*. In the novel, she's English. Oh, well.

STAR TREATMENT

What's strange was that Mel Gibson, who does not see himself, he is said, as ever

being a "star" had to have the crowd held at bay by extra police when he made a personal appearance in Perth for the launching of *Mad Max 2*. Will they still love him when he goes vaulting on a magical van for *The Year*?

ON FRIENDSHIP

If you want to become a friend of the Sydney Film Festival, which needs friends to survive like all other art enterprises, telephone the SFF's administrator, Lynn McCarthy at (02) 860 1909 and she will tell you about the benefits of being friendly. Bryan Brown is first endorser and Official Friend.

TRAVELLING CREAM

And the Travelling Film Festival, after touring Tasmania in February, treks on to

March and April to Orange, Richmond, Armidale and Sawtell in NSW, Townsville and Portmores Queensland, and Darwin. The art films are the crown of the SFF 1981 program — *The Best Is Fall* (Switzerland), *Becky Of Our Enemy* (Poland), *The Palace* (East Germany) which was voted best film, *Blue Collar USA*, *Mon Oncle d'Amérique* (France) and *Mama Tere No* (Spain).



Bryan Brown — Official Friend of SFF

AFI NEW BOARD

The new board of the Australian Film Institute, which was elected at the end of 1981, is Senator David Hanson, Michael Pezz, John Flann, John James Bailey, Ray Edmundson, Don McLennan and Alice Thorpe — the instant mostly as balance of political class, commercial ambition and ethical anxiety.

GERMAN FILMS

The Goethe Institute's program of German films for Sydney and Melbourne (Paddington Town Hall in Sydney, State Film Centre for Melbourne) includes a Rainer Werner Fassbinder film called *Effie Brandt* starring Wendy Schayz, *Isle of The Marriage of Maria Braun* and neo-no-western *La Haine*. The first film starring Maria Schell (who briefly tried Hollywood when it was Hollywood) and a Jutta Bruckner documentary called *Do Right and Be Afraid of No One* — a training tale.



Mel Gibson — mobbed for *Mad Max 2*.



AN INNOCENT APPROACH

PHILLIP ADAMS, once known for his outspoken views, talks to ELIZABETH RIDDELL about his milder approach to the vagaries of the film industry.

"If there is one thing I love and fear," Phillip Adams said, finishing a conversation on the life and times of the Australian film industry and his own considerable part in it, "it is the mid-Pacific version of the mid-Atlantic film. For one thing, it doesn't work as a commercial proposition. As the British, who attempted the mid-Atlantic film — Lord Grade, for instance — and the Canadians, found, it is partly that that has left their local industry in tatters.

"We have to take notice of these events. If the British industry is making a comeback, a return to something of its great days, it is because it is making its own idiosyncratic films.

"One of the things that people overseas like about Australian films, and a quality that will get them audiences (but not make producers millionaires overnight), is their rather innocent approach. That phrase was actually used by Pauline Kael, the film correspondent for *The New Yorker*, in an important interview, I think on the kerb outside a cinema where she had just seen an Australian film which she liked. It is a quality she has emphasised in her reviews of Australian films and it has been noted by other respected critics."

Phillip Adams is head of an advertising agency, a writer of satirical articles for newspapers and magazines, a noted debater on communication, a source of good quotes on contemporary society and the Australian most often interviewed on the Michael Parkinson program. Or so it seems.

He is a producer in his own right.

(*The Getting of Wisdom*, and *Grosdel*, *Grosdel*, *Grosdel*) and one half of Adams Packer Film Productions Pty Ltd. The other half is Kerry Packer of Australian Consolidated Press, Channel Nine, the late World Series Cricket, coal mining, ski-resorting and quarter-horse. The word was, when the company was formed, that Adams would supply and organise the ideas and personnel and Packer would put up the money, but Adams says it was never the intention that Packer should just foot the bill. Adams Packer is to meet around to find investors there all over, including the US, so long as all the so-to-speak editorial rights stay with the company.

For instance, Adams could have raised American money to re-start the temporarily shelved *The Desert Bays*, but it would have meant substantial American injection, including an American director. The director and scriptwriter is a Melbourne man, Ben Lewis, and, Adams says, "I wouldn't have anybody do it but Ben. In any case the budget was creeping up to the \$6 million mark, an unconscionable amount for an Australian film. This is unrealistic money. What is happening now to *The Desert Bays* is that it is getting a major rewrite which will make it much more manageable, and it will soon go into pre-production."

The state of the game is other Adams Packer projects.

We Of The Never Never — no release date, but the story was being put together in January.

Fighting Back, based on the novel,

Toss, by John Ermbing, is being produced by Tom Jeffrey and Sue Melikian, with Lewyn Fraz-Gerald and Chris McQuade in the roles of Tom's parents. Paul Smith plays Tom.

Lonely Hearts, formerly called "Close to the Heart" (a title thought to be like that of Francis Ford Coppola's newest \$26 million film called *Close from the Heart*) has got as far as a second draft of a script by John Clarke (Fred Dagg) and Paul Cox, who will also direct. It is the story of a mature couple — Wendy Hughes and Norman Rye — who meet through an introduction agency, and what comes of it.

Blackhearts, a "crash course" on the US film industry with a script by John Clarke and players called Robert Redford, Paul Newman and the Marx Brothers who are not quite the way they sound.

Abracadabra, an animated film aimed at children, by Alex Sten. It will be the first animated film to use a new 3D system invented by two Australians, Mike Brownstein and Veda Moll, which requires only one lens.

Sten's other animated film, *Grosdel*, *Grosdel*, *Grosdel* — from which, Adams says, he never expected very much in the way of box office — ran for seven weeks in Melbourne and then went into the Sydney Opera House cinema. It suffered from a lack of target, an unidentifiable audience, but Adams says it has sold satisfactorily in Europe.

Another film of the future is *Caripha*, a story about a whaling ship, to be directed by Bruce Beresford, in protest

working in America after his assignment to R and R's *Forever* fell through. Incidentally, and oddly, after what can be seen as the fairly sensational success of *Gullfoss*, R and R have announced no further production plans.

Adams Packer has several times been headlined as "taking on" the tax office in an endeavour to get the controversial tax deduction legislation reversed or at least clarified, but Adams' private attitude seems to be that the difficulties will iron themselves out. He notes that both the Prime Minister and the Treasurer have been on the set of *Kate and the Begonia*, an Forest Home Film, which features Liddy Clark and Val Lehman as two crime queens (presumably Kate Leigh and Tilly Devine) so that they could gain some understanding of the scale of energy (and money) needed to make a film.

"There is not much film investment cash about," Philip Adams says "because there are plenty of other ways for people to play games with funny money, rather than putting it into films. And there are difficulties attached to the legislation, to put it mildly.

"But I believe that our industry survives, and will survive, through government. That is, directly through subsidy from the Australian Film Commission and the State corporations and indirectly through taxation concessions. The system needs to operate in the spirit of the legislation as well as the letter. And some extraordinary things are likely to happen."

In fact, the very day we spoke an extraordinary thing did happen. It was reported that the Department of Home Affairs had conferred a film certificate as an Australian film on *The Pirate Movie*, a variation on the Gilbert and Sullivan *Pirates of Penzance*, produced by JHI Productions (principal Ted Hamilton, well known Melbourne variety performer, who spent some years in California) and costing an estimated \$6 million.

The certificate means that it qualifies for some or all of the 150% tax reduction available to investors. The film has American male and female leads — Krissy McNicol and Chris Atkins — an English director, Ken Annakin, and other people from overseas including an art director, special effects experts and an associate producer.

FILM



-REVIEW

Heatwave — a splendid thriller

by Elizabeth Riddell

Heatwave has a lot of power and a kind of headlong enthusiasm and it is emphatic in a manner that has been noticeably absent from a good deal of the Australian product. It is a film that knows where it is going although the story, of course, does not proceed to a solution, seeing that the subject is a competition for the use, or exploitation, of land regardless of who is setting on it in little old-fashioned dwellings. It is a story that has no conventions and one that will be repeated, with variations in the sequence of events and the moral and moral violence that accompanies these events, many times.

Under the resource title, promising a violent and/or explosive experience, a collection of more or less flawed people manoeuvre as a developer manipulates his bulldozers and steam-shovel advisers against residents of an inner city block he wishes to demolish in order to build on it a multi-million dollar housing project he calls Eden, his idea.

The model of Eden is shown early in the film, set on a table in the office of the

architect, but it was beyond my power to comprehend what it would look like when translated into bricks and mortar, or rather concrete, glass and landscaping. As the model maker, Paul Proctor, is also named as architectural consultant, along with Steve Lennik, I expect he knows what he is doing.

The leader of the residents' action group is Mary Ford, who also publishes a little newspaper. Her supporter is Kate Dean, who works in a bookshop and has as first an amusing, quirky attitude to the fuss. When Mary Ford disappears this changes Kate until she is in the row boats and all.

Meanwhile the developer is running out of money and time, the architect of Eden is asked to cut corners, the age is being subverted with fire and water, the tenants battle out a demolition now and the police harass everyone except the developer.

And Christmas rolls on, the heatwave pounds down, beautiful Sydney, and the sweat rolls down the faces and lodges in the armpits of rich and poor alike, except for those who can work, drink and sleep without considering.

The plot we have just economically outlined may remind some people of certain unrecorded incidents which occurred in the last two or three years around Victoria Street, which hangs high above



Judy Davis — another illuminating performance — and Richard Blair

Woolesmooles. I shouldn't bother too much about that, but rather like *Alamo* as a splendid thriller with socially conscious under-and-oversides (and some holes in the script that are hardly noticeable in the time of watching), some very fresh performances from actors who are familiar to all of us from the TV screen, and the wonderfully subtle, many-layered portrayal of Kate Deane by Judy Davis. She builds Kate up line by line, logically, without ever exposing the mechanism of the development and without heroics. In the end Kate has some further left, as well as rage.

Another outstanding performance in this film is that of Chris Haywood as the hangman developer, Peter Hausman, a cockney with the usual taste of how he made his first dollar and nobody was going to stop him making his second, or millionth. Haywood has a wonderfully low boiling point. When shocked on his intentions he looks as if the blood is going to come spurting from the top of his head. The character is well written, and works successfully against the roles of intrinsigent residents, union leader, reporter, Mr Samuel Hausman's five played respectively by Don Crosby, Dennis Miller, John Melton, Frank Gallacher and John Gregg. The senior policeman who is calculated to candle your blood with his saw-sawing smile and swiftly produced search warrant is Graham Rossie. Carole Stanger, Gillian Jones and Tim Bow do well as the mostly missing Mary Ford, Barbet the strip tease, and a friendly restaurant anti-Eisen-stic named Anne.

The hero of the piece is the archetypal Stephen West, played by Richard Moor, and here the structure weakens, not because Moor is not a good actor but because the character as written is not convincing. It is hard to see how he ever got mixed up with his partner, Robert Duncan (Bill Hunter) who appears not to be able to do a straight line, much less participate in roles. The writers have also given Stephen a wife, played by Anna Jonsson, in reality in the panner. On second thoughts, perhaps Stephen just loves to be misled, misquoted the wife and partner who can do it.

The director and scriptwriter, with Marc Rosenberg, of this film, which should give the local industry a good push in the right direction, is Philip Noyce, who made *Newsfront* and before that *Roadhouse Newsfront* deserved and got a big commercial success in Australia and is doing well abroad. Noyce and his producer, Hilary Lunsted, have assembled a most accomplished group of co-workers, among them the cinematographer Vincent Munton, Carmen Allen for the music, production designer Ross Major and whoever helped the director set up that stunning panoramic scene of the New Year crashing in at Kings Cross.

The distributing company is Roadhouse-

WATCH FOR THESE

ON GOLDEN POND is a celebration of the pains and pleasures of ageing, somewhat marred by an embarrassing performance from Katharine Hepburn and a 13 years old boy actor, Doug McKelvey, whose chorus girl looks work against one's sympathy. But Henry Fonda is there with all the best lines, and Jane Fonda with the best body.

SOUTHERN COMFORT, an uncomfortable film about National Guard soldiers on exercises in Louisiana swamps, seems to be making the point that educated volunteers react more bravely and sensibly in awkward situations, as shot at by the swamp-dwelling Cajon trappers, than your average peasant or red neck. Keith Carradine and Powers Boothe star and survive.



Powers Boothe as Charles Hardin in Southern Comfort.

PIRIEST OF LOVE is a triumph for Janet Subraman as Frieda. GH Lawrence's dynamic, introverted German wife and gypsyish companion, but everybody does well in this absorbing, exhilarating English film with Ian McKellen as Lawrence and Penelope Keith as their burning devoted Dorothy Brett.

BLOW OUT — all puff and no blow, somebody unkindly said. But it is a Brian de Palma film which means it is very well-directed for this, and to more than thrill de Palma (Giavroc, Dressed To Kill) seldom surprises. John Travolta actually stakes a claim as an actor with his portrayal of a sound effects man indulging his hobby of recording night bird calls who awakes to a murder.

TRUE CONFESSIONS has Robert de Niro and Robert Duval as brothers, a priest and policeman in 30's Los

Angeles, the city of sleaze. Remarkable performances in a story of shakedown, but very entertaining, political squabble. From Gregory John Dunne's novel, now in paperback, which he himself called "a model of petty treasons".



Robert de Niro, the Catholic priest in True Confessions.

MAN OF IRON is so close to what seemed to be happening in Poland that it would be a miracle, even if not superbly made by Andrzej Wajda, who continues his exploration of Polish history started in *Man of Marble*. There is a lot of documentary footage taken at the time of the Gdansk strike. The hero is Man of Marble's son, and many characters in the earlier film appear.

SHOCK TREATMENT has a lot of crazy people in it, not only in the Three Stooges genre but spin-offs from *The Rocky Horror Show* (including Brad and Janet) and expertly organised by Jim Sharman. The action takes place in a television show whose sponsor is named Farkley Flavacon. Among those present are Barry Humphries, Richard O'Brien and Rocky star Neil Campbell.

CHAMOTS OF FIRE — the sleeper of 1981 and still going strong before audiences which have been lulled into the cinema of all states by powerful word-of-mouth recommendation. But once gone, it may never come back, so hurry on down.

SUTHERLAND ON SUTHERLAND

Following the resounding success of the first operatic performance of *La Traviata* in Sydney's Domain — a collaboration between the Festival of Sydney and the Australian Opera — the organisers have announced a return bout in 1983.

Despite the original date of January 16 being rained out and the event transferred to the following Monday, an estimated 20,000 people witnessed the historic performance and before the concert had even commenced Patrick Vetch, General Manager of the Australian Opera, announced from the stage "We'll be back again next year". Plans are already being hatched for a spectacular follow-up next January.

Meanwhile, spurred on no doubt by the accolades showered on the event by the public and media, Alderman Douglas Sutherland (no relation to the diva), the Lord Mayor of Sydney, has gone into print advocating the construction of a permanent music bowl to house future such events. Taxes from opera have been responsible for

galvanising more than one political revolution over the years, why not move a City Council to provide a much needed public facility? Wonders of wonders, maybe even the ABC might venture out of its self-imposed concert cocoons to perform outdoors!

IAN CAMPBELL FOR THE MET

General Managers are back in the news again? Suspense of the season has been the sudden and totally unexpected announcement that Ian D Campbell, General Manager of the highly successful State Opera of South Australia since 1978, will leave the company in September for a position with the New York Metropolitan Opera. In October he takes up the post of Assistant Artistic Administrator there which will bring him into close and constant contact with the Met's musical Music Director, James Levine in the planning of repertoire and seasons and the carrying of production. He will be immediately replaceable in this capacity to the legendary Joan Lippson who over the years has

developed more operatic careers than most of us have friendships.

Campbell's regime has seen the South Australian Company advance and grow in stature as well as in turnover and for heaven's sake is presently good shape. At the time of writing no decision had been made on a successor in Adelaide but it is believed that enquiries would be welcomed by the Board from prospective candidates.

THE BATTERED BRIDE

The operatic "Egg Hunter of the Year" Award would have to go to the morning daily that found red-under-the-bed in the production team of The Australian Opera's *The Battered Bride*. Lamentable, the production certainly was and I have certainly never been of the party that advocates that arts should be underwritten, but that poor Mr Rice should have to be a "RGI" again" in order to be a bad opera producer seems more. Brisbane audiences need have no fear, however, that their minds will be poisoned when the Australian Opera's season opens there on March 13. The production is in new hands. Young Australian producer, Andrew Smiles, recently returned from London to recover from the retrospective, rather puzzled, no-man's-land, where it had been left last time round and place it firmly back in its intended rustic charm.

Another welcome revival for Brisbane will be John Copley's superb production of *Madama Butterfly* which the producer has recently returned to Australia to revive. Audiences there will be particularly fortunate in having the opportunity of witnessing Joan Garden and the New Zealand soprano Lyne Garden who will alternate the role of Cio-Cio-San.

THE DIVALL DECADE

It is a measure of some ways of the instability, or at least lack of continuity in the arts in Australia, that it should be not only remarkable that Richard Dvall a celebrated tenor in his 10th anniversary of his appointment as Musical Director of the Victoria State Opera, but that no-one else can lay claim to as long a tenure in such a position with any other company. Dvall, OBE, returns shortly from London, where he has been studying *The Ring* with Sir Reginald Goodall, which would seem to indicate that the company has not abandoned the idea of mounting it at some future date. The Australian Opera's announcement of its own intention to proceed with *The Cycle* commencing in 1984. Meanwhile, soon after Dvall's return, General Manager Ken McKenzie-Farber goes to the United States to take up his Mobil fellowship awarded late last year.



Joan Sutherland — "Back next year".

THE MASS SPIRIT

It's curious how a number of quite isolated events can suddenly be seen to sum-up the opera of the times. In three very different exercises in three different cities opera companies confronted the problem of dealing with a mass audience under very less than normal operating conditions.

In early December Canberra Opera presented Verdi's war-horse *Aida* in the National Indoor Centre over two nights, playing to four thousand people on each occasion. In Sydney in mid-January the combined forces of the Festival of Sydney and the Australian Opera staged an open air concert performance of *La Traviata* in the Domain to twenty thousand people and on February 6 the Victorian State Opera also "went public" at the Myer Music Bowl with a free concert of highlights from opera and operetta. Each episode was a first for the company concerned.

It is not my purpose to review any of these activities as performances. Rather, it is as events coming to close together within a two month period that we should consider how extraordinary they were and speculate on what sudden rush of blood to the managerial head has brought them about. At a time when the "flagship" mentality of "National" companies seems to have a strangle-hold on Government thinking and, because of the apparently favoured treatment in their 10% increase to the Australian Opera (along with the Australian Ballet and Trust Orchestra), the mere idea of these extravaganza features in our cultural market is an embattled one

Justin Macdonnell looks at the massive audiences drawn to three recent community opera events

"Irrational" in Jensen's words was never more apparent than when literally hundreds of people got on buses and planes from all over Australia and, for all I know, came on foot to Canberra for *Aida* and between ten and fifteen thousand people remained standing in the drizzle to hear the last act of *Traviata*. The conditions at all of these events were less than congenial and yet they came.

There was in the two former cases an atmosphere almost of pilgrimage as we stamped over the recently bulldozed earth of the Canberra Institute of Technology or into the soggy Domain. Even the departure from the venue was made difficult by pouring rain. No one seemed to care. They had come to witness a miracle — a great collective event. It was somewhere between a VFL final and Formula 1 in other cases did the Virgin Mary appear, though by and large the crowd goals were scored

and the public was dazzled by the sheer — monotony of a all — the larger-than-liveness which of the performing arts opera provides better than any other.

What does it all mean? In the context of the inquiry into opera and music theatre conducted by the Australian Council in 1979/80, the committee commissioned a poll from ANSO that revealed that while 62% have never been to the performance of opera and 34% indicated that they thought it unlikely that they ever would, 74% considered that it was important that Government fund opera.

One is, of course, inclined to be somewhat sceptical about statistics gathered in this fashion even though there is no reason on the face of it actually to disbelieve them. Events such as these mass concert activities do however go somewhat towards justifying the statistics' claim. They also provide some measure of access to that hitherto high percentage who "thought they probably never would". When one considers that, in essence, the quality of choice involved is not all that different from saying that in the rest of their lives "they probably never would have a Chinese meal" these events develop significance to the future of the art form.

The need to go out into the market place and if not actually force feed the community then certainly tear down some of the barriers — whether they be opera house walls or barriers of the mind — and make the activities more welcoming is at last becoming foremost in opera management thinking. The



John Shaw and Donald Shaw in *Canberra Opera's Aida* — an atmosphere almost of pilgrimage.

Australian Opera has already announced that it proposes to make "Opera in the Park" an annual event and Doris Joan Sutherland, who sang the role of Violetta in the inaugural concert, has said in an interview that she expects to be "back next year". For better or for worse the egotitarian spirit is still very close to the hearts of most Australians and the feeling that the great diva is worth "just an ordinary person like you and me", however twisted a sentiment, was made very real to people by an event such as the Dorian performance. There was a genuine sense in which, more than all the Friends, lunches, lecture series or educational programmes, that night at a smoke went further towards demystifying the opera artist in our society than any other I can recall. There was a nearly perverse sense in which the audience almost wanted it to rain in order to test how the artists would react. They wanted to be reassured that despite their great artists, and in some instances their exalted position in our society, that they were prepared to exhibit the classically alleged national trait of "sticking it out".

But the spirit of the times is clearly as alive in Canberra and Melbourne as it is in Sydney and their performances too represented a striking relaxation in the relationship between performer and audience.

It is not a question in any of these cases of necessarily making new

converts to opera who will immediately rush off to buy a subscription — though that may well happen. At *Aida*, of course, the audience had already bought seats — eight thousand of them! — the significance is that in all cases they see more a public celebration of the fact that the one area of the performing arts in which Australians have been acknowledged to excel! — and indeed excel on the world stage for over a century — a singing and more particularly singing opera.

These events are a public tribute to that greatness and they draw on a vein of public emotion not at all unlike that which creates the public frenzy around Melbourne Cup Day when the people who would never dream of having a bet and would scarcely know one end of a horse from another go to parties, listen to the race and enter a sweep. These gargantuan nights of opera whilst certainly they excite and hopefully stimulate, went further in that they measure us of the importance of this great irrational amalgam of theatre and song in the context of the live arts, generating the blood sport element that is never far from any opera performance of worth. They publicly confirm our pleasure and pride in having it in our society even when we may not act in ourselves of it frequently or at all.

Whether now? The Australian Opera is determined to make its concert in Sydney an annual event. There has been talk by them of similar exercises in other cities. The VSO had not at the

time of writing publicly stated its intention for the future, but in a city where "Music for the People" in the Myer Music Bowl has long been an important tradition it would seem logical for them to keep up what they have started so well. Especially as the inaugural effort has been supported by the State Ministry of the Arts.

Canberra Opera, maddeningly, has opted not to repeat their experiment in 1982. One understands only too well the enormous effort that went into the assembling of such forces — over 600 participants alone — for a company with minuscule staff and resources. But taking the bull by the horns is exactly what it is, or should be, all about after so spectacular a start, and I believe strongly that even the financial backing needed to stage concerts or productions of this kind can be found. Anyone who attended any of these spectacles would have come away expecting their organisers to be rushed with sponsorship offers from the commercial sector. I hope they will be because rarely could a sponsor be offered better value for the investment of its corporate dollar.

Much has been said, especially of late, of the need to involve the electronic media in the dissemination of opera. There has been considerable talk of the need to televise live production to make opera more accessible to the population, especially in isolated areas.

There would be few who would not applaud the principle and since it has been continuously demonstrated that the techniques exist for this to be done at a very high standard one can only endorse the effort of managements to make it happen. But, frankly, if it ever became a choice between the great nights of mass spectacle of last December and January and opera on the box, my weight would be all on the side of the former. Opera is after all an urban activity that arose in the great centres of population, political and social hubbub, and learning, and it is sustained by the continuing diversity of modern society, its interests and tastes in what is still essentially an intellectually pluralist society. That too needs celebrating. I hope that for the sake of the theatre arts in Australia and their continued ability to "buzz" the community, our opera managements stick to their guns and push ahead with more great mass nights. The world needs them.

Summer season — some musical mundanities

by Ken Hanley

Andrew Sinclair's re-staging of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* is not only a creditable salvaging of the libretto that proved for a production in Sydney last October, it is significantly funnier and stronger than the staging that Sinclair had managed to put together in Melbourne by November. Only the Sydney dancers are less convincing than their southern counterparts.

There is only one change in casting. Ben Stephens sings as Icarus, the man whose bride is burned, in place of Robin Donald. Stephens makes an intelligent schemer, but his voice was in poor shape judged even on its own standards. Donald looks more the village lad, and had sung beautifully, although pushing harder in the very top of the range. As Marinka, Gloria Fowles remains delicious. May she be seen more often in such roles, and not only in future as a fake coloratura.

The opera itself showed its relative class by improving rather than getting more tedious as successive scenes unfolded. Vasil is probably Giuseppe Verdi's most convincing comic character, while Geoffrey Arnold gave us a very quick overture that never faded, and kept the Elizabethan Sydney Orchestra in good rhythmic shape and full tone. The sets are still poor—provincial at best. But if *The Rite of Spring* without a more singer is barely worth the asking price of \$35 (Donald Shanks on the marriage broker is good, without anything like the impact that he brings to patriarchal roles in tragedy), what is to say of the comedies of three centuries which were also part of the AGO's summer season at the Opera House?

From the recording under Richard Bonynge which has been available for some years, I had concluded that Rossini by William Sheldis was a very poor pastoral compared with, say, Handel's *Idra* and Gluck's, yet *Rosina* comes from the decade of Mozart's *Figaro*. Only Christopher Kenton's sense of style as director and the golden-corned Kenneth Russell's design kept the audience constantly chuckling with, rather than at, the performers. Come to think of it, *Rosina* was one of the funniest of the past too. Only Jennifer Barnum, a retired yodeler William by name, sang with the wit and quality of sound one expects from this company.

Last month I asked some hard questions about the national company's role. By keeping in employment most of the operatic



40's production of *The Bartered Bride*. Photo: Franco Galca.



Damon Kersbach, Anna-Maria McDonald and Paul Ferris in *Rosina*.

kindergarten singers who sang in Rossini and Offenbach's *Bar-bi-brin* which followed it, the company is perhaps ensuring the future of the art form in Australia, while analysing more distinguished voices to be covered against misapprehension in heavier operas. But only Jennifer McGregor and the upper reaches of baritone Michael Lewin sounded worthy of the first two operas as though they should be cast as soloists in this company, which ought to be as far above its regional brethren in size and quality of tone as Covent Garden is above RNO or the Metropolitan New York City Opera.

By far the most distressing aspect of *Bar-bi-brin* is the banality of the music. It's better composer than Offenbach had been guilty of the same, it would not last be worth revival, half a dozen commercial backs wrong in Sydney now could surpass it. Yet it is given



Paul Ferris and Jennifer McGregor in *Bar-bi-brin*.

in the occasion for one of the worst productions (again by Christopher Kenton) that one is likely to see in small theatre venues. What an irony!

Kenton's adaptation has provoked that Offenbach's company, *Les Bouffes-Parisiens*, is touring Australia. Theophrastus is set in China, and is of a sleep-inducing sedulity to make *Chu-Chu-Chu* seem as snail as *Turandot*. Kenton gives us a chorus of Chinese warblers costumed like Bardi's Indians, a set (again from Kenneth Russell) which comments artlessly on the piece while never ceasing to belittle it, and some very funny stage business. To what end?

If the purpose of trying to revive or actively the operatically willful was to serve as a long, painful taste to Wagner's

writing of Chabrier's *Tra le Nuvole*, it was not universally justified. Despite some all-conquering "Bassos," sound effects in Walker's over-the-top, fanciful score, the opera does justice to the screen comic intent of Chabrier. The comedy is worth taking seriously. And it provided the only truly operatic singing of the night. Gregory Turney, as the beer-like neighbour demanding payment of a debt, managed to

sing with extreme force without actually shouting — until he surrendered to the charms of the widow Popowa (Heather Hogg, who always sings and acts like an actor of the first rank). As her servant, Robert Eddle was also in fine, full voice.

A conservative yet solid production, both seen before in Sydney, were complemented by an assured musical reading under the direction of David Kraus. The tumultuous

appliance which greeted the final curtain was surely a grateful tribute to the singers for producing the sounds that make opera splendid of whole audiences. The earlier splendid productions of Christopher Minkowski which were largely noted as musical misadventures would be better employed in the non-opera theatre — unless Mr Bonyage can unearth neglected scores worthy of our consideration.

OPERA

-GUIDE

NSW

THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA (3 6586)

Lucasia Borgia by Donizetti (in Italian). Dame Joan Sutherland stars as one of the most fascinating and original women of history: the infamous Lucasia Borgia. In this stunning new Concert Hall staging of Donizetti's compelling opera. Conductor: Richard Bonyage; producer: George Ogilvie; designer: Kristian Fredrikson. Cast: John Sutherland, Bernadette Cullen, Lamberio Furian, Robert Aliman. March 1-4.

Norma by Bellini (in Italian). The nineteenth century saw the flowering of brilliant operas — literally beautiful song — and of these Norma was one of the greatest. A magnificent orchestral score is matched by vocal fireworks as the story moves from the sacred groves of the Orinda to the massive funeral pyre on which Norma and her lover are doomed to die. Conductor, Richard Bonyage; producer, Christopher Bonyage; designer, Fiorella Mariani. Cast: Rita Hunter, Rosemary Gane, Alison Austin, Clifford Grant. March 2-5.

Comedies Of Three Cantantes Rosina by William Shield (English). Conductor: Richard Bonyage; producer, Christopher Bonyage; designer, Kenneth Rowell.

The Swan by William Walton (English). Conductor: David Kraus; producer: Robin Lovejoy; designer: Tom Lingwood.

Ba-le-tan by Jacques Offenbach (French/English/Italian "romance"). Conductor: Richard Bonyage; producer: Christopher Redshaw; designer: Kenneth Rowell. Robin Lovejoy's exquisite production of *The Swan*, featuring Heather Hogg's independent performance as Popowa is joined by two repertoire comedies. Shield's *Rosina* premiered in 1782 and Offenbach's knockabout one-act

Ba-le-tan March 5. **Madama Butterfly** by Puccini (in Italian). Conductor: Stuart Challeader; producer: John Coppley; designers: Henry Bardon and Michael Sternati. With Rhonda Bruce, Kathleen Moore, Serge Beggelin and John Pringle. Coppley's highly successful production is a mainstay of the AO's repertoire and features a series of the company's leading house talent. March 6.

QLD

THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA

The Bartered Bride by Smetana (in English). Conductor: Geoffrey Arnold; producer: Andrew Sinclair; designer: Sanka Hurdus; choreographer: Ajinda Surova. With Judith Saliba, Ron Stevens, Graeme Ewer and Donald Shanks. This disappointing rendition of the Czech favourite has been largely revamped for the summer season with hopefully happier results. March 13, 16, 18, 20.

MADAMA BUTTERFLY by Puccini with Joan Garden or Lynne Cartion, Kathleen Moore or Jennifer Birmingham and Lamberio Furian or Sergei Beggelin. March 15, 17, 19, 20, 22. Her Majesty's Theatre 221 2777.

SA

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL STATE OPERA OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Makropoulos Affair by Janacek (in English). The Festival production will be produced by Eliah Moshefsky conducted by Denis Vaughan and designed by Brian Thompson (sets) and Luciana Amighi (costumes). Elisabeth Soderstrom sings the enigmatic Erina Marty in this Australian premiere. March 4, 6, 10, 13, 15. Festival Theatre — 51 6161. **Noyes Fladdie** by Britten. Musical

director: Dean Patterson; producer, Brian Detnam; designer, Casey van Saville. This delightful Children's opera based on the medieval Chester Miracle plays promises to be one of the gems of the Adelaide Festival. From March 8. Scott Theatre.

ACT

CANBERRA OPERA

The Elm of Love by Donizetti (in English). March 17, 19, 20. Canberra Theatre — 69 7600.

VIC

THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA

La Traviata by Verdi. With Joan Garden, Alison Austin, Robert Aliman, Cynthia Johnston, Rosemary Gunn, Robin Donald, John Gorman, Peter Van Der Sloot, John Wegner. Opera. March 31. Princess Theatre — 662 2911.

VICTORIA STATE OPERA

Musical Theatre Season 1982. **A Certain Twilight** by Mark Foster. **A Double Dissolution** by Peter Clapham. **Hunger** by Neil Clifton. Conductors: Andrew Greene and Graham Cox; director: Peter Jordan; designer: Mark Weger. These world premieres by young Australian composers resulting from the Music 1981 composers competition. March 11, 12. Universal Theatre.

WA

WA OPERA COMPANY

Basically Brahms with W.A. Arts Orchestra. March 27. Perth Concert Hall — 325 3399. **A Gilbert & Sullivan Special** devised by John Minton, with Terry Johnson, James Malcolm and Voices (a live member vocal concert). Memorable songs from one of the Savoy Operas. March 11-27. Hole in the Wall — 321 2493.

JOBS FOR THE BOYS AND GIRLS

The arts in Australia have never been so volatile. With funding generally reduced and companies and organisations folding up, there is a growing army of free-lance consultants available.

At the same time there are a number of interesting top jobs on the market.

- **Director, NSW Conservatorium of Music** (through the resignation of Ben Hobeck, the great secretary who brought the "Cae" into the 20th Century).
- **Director, Music Board, Australia Council** (the good Doctor died apparently well, wrote Glen Isaac).
- **General Manager, State Opera of South Australia** (Ian D Campbell has landed the plum job of Assistant Artistic Administrator at the Met, although he won't be taking it up until October).
- **Programming Manager, Adelaide Festival Centre** (Tony Power's resignation before his tragic death).
- **General Manager, Queensland Lyric Opera Company** (Anthony Jeffrey is only baby-sitting for the moment).
- **Manager/Librarian, Australia Music Centre** (Yes, the Centre's colorful holiday is about to end).

And who knows? Some of the new positions created at the re-vamped Australia Council may not be filled internally.

FOGG JOINS ABC

Anthony Fogg, brilliant pianist and Programmer/Adviser to the Seymour Group has joined the staff of the Federal Music Department of the ABC. Let's hope some of his critical and innovative programming infiltrates to the sound waves.

PROCEEDINGS AVAILABLE

The proceedings of the WA Seminar on Music and Dance, sponsored by the Musicological Society of Australia, can now be ordered from the Music Department of the University of WA.

COHAN'S MUSICAL DIRECTOR "UNIMPRESSIONS"

The First International Dance Course for Choreographers and Composers (see Dance section) took place in Auckland in January, with funds from the Music and Theatre Boards, as well as the International Committee of the Australia Council, the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council and the



Stuart Challender

Gulbenkian Foundation

Directed by Robert Cahoon, Artistic Director of the London Contemporary Dance Company, the Musical Director was Geoffrey Burgon, now famous for his music for the new BBC series *Bruchland Revue*. Our four young composers, Brian Howard, Graziosi Kostas, James Prael and David Wardell, were not so impressed with him. They were amazed at his lack of knowledge of the contemporary repertoire and of contemporary notation.

FIRES OF VICTORIA

There are persistent rumors that Christopher London-Gee, English conductor now settled in Victoria, hopes to form a new group "somewhere between The Fires of London and the London Sinfonietta" and with a neo-romantic bias. Xenakis and Stravinsky is the first proposed programme.

NEW AO CONDUCTOR TO HOLLAND

Stuart Challender, the new young resident conductor at the Australian Opera, has made a striking impression with his large and romantic performance of *Madama Butterfly*. In a generous gesture of great confidence, Richard Bonynge has invited Challender to conduct Jean Sutherland in three performances of *Lulu* in Holland during March.

STEEL CONSULTANCIES

Anthony Steel, Consultant to the AETT has taken up two other consultancies at some time to the Singapore Arts Festival and to the classical music arm of Michael Egleby. His company has also recently put in a feasibility study for a "celebration" in the greater western suburbs for 1980.

MUSIC IN THEATRE

by James Murdoch

In addition to the vast amount of music performed in the concert halls in Australia, there is a considerable body of work being performed in Australia's theatres. It rarely carries with it a mention in a review, but it is likely that the public has heard more Australian music in the theatre than ever it has in the concert hall or even radio.

The Australia Music Centre's *Dramatic Catalogue of Australian Compositions*, published five years ago, contains some astonishing facts.

Incidental Music for Drama: 59 composers in 227 productions.

Musical Theatre: Musicals, operettas, pantomime, revue, rock opera, puppet productions, young people's musical dramas: 92 composers in 114 productions.

Music for Dance: 66 composers in 138 productions.

Opera and Music Theatre: 77 composers in 84 music theatre works and 115 operas and operettas.

The idea of a composer-in-residence is catching on. The Old Tote for many years invariably employed Sandra McKean in at least 25 productions since 1969. Helen Gifford has composed for the Melbourne Theatre Company during the 70's and her splendid music has elevated many a production. Jim Corner and Nick Lyons have worked with many theatre companies including the Nimrod. The new Lighthouse Company in South Australia now is working solidly with Sarah de Jong (Mrs Louis Nowra). The Sydney Theatre Company has already worked with Sarah de Jong and has recently invited Brian Howard to compose music for its new *Muchobit*.

Every drama and dance company



*A Venetian masterwork drawing —
house for Maxwell Barker's Venetian
houses*

should have a music adviser. Not necessarily a composer (they tend to want to compose everything) but someone who can marry the most appropriate composer to a diversity of plays and who can tell an artistic director of a dance company that the music he or she wants to use (or an invited guest choreographer wants to use) is a disaster before too much time and money has been spent on it.

There is also the question of recorded music used in theatre. In the past, it has been too much tippy-toeing through someone's record collection,

and some appalling music has been collected on us in this way.

Another aspect is the use of Australian music. Better a third-rate piece of Australian music than a third-rate non-Australian work. Better still a first-rate piece of Australian music. More is around every year.

The situation with musicals (musical comedy) is still vexed. In the abridged *Report to the Australia Council* by the Committee of Enquiry on Opera/Music Theatre in Australia, chapter nine dealt with proposals for fostering musicals and recommended the establishment of a Musical Development Fund.

Nothing came of it and in the meantime there are whole generations of Australians who have never experienced the classics of the genre. It has been left to brave entrepreneurs such as the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust and its colleagues to mount such works as *Enta*, *Barnum* and *Ned Kelly*. But where is *Chu Chin Chu*? By default, it has fallen to the amateur companies to present the older works, which often suffer from the amateur approach. The recent sparkling revivals in the West End, have proved their enduring vitality and appeal.

In comparison, contemporary opera has been reasonably served by the State Opera of South Australia, the Victorian State Opera and the University of NSW Opera, although no Henry opera has been performed in Australia yet, nor any major work by Malcolm Williamson or Peggy Glanville-Hicks.

The astonishing track record of the State Opera of South Australia was charted by Justin Macdonell in the last issue of *Theatre Australia*, which

brings us to Music Theatre. What is it?

Andrew Potter reports in the *New Globe* that the genre, title Music Theatre was a convenient catch-phrase of the 1960's "to designate musical works for small or moderate forces that make a dramatic element in their presentation, including small-scale operas" such as Alexander Goehr's *Nabuck's Shepard* as presented by the now defunct London Music Theatre Ensemble, formed within weeks of the *Perpetrators*, in the late 1960's.

For a while there was a healthy competitiveness between the two groups. Goehr directed the London Music Theatre Ensemble and Peter Maxwell Davies and Harrison Birtwistle were the co-Directors of the *Perpetrators*, which after all had as its base that great and central 20th century music theatre piece *Purest Love* in a remarkable performance by Mary Thomas. Then Peter Maxwell Davies leapt ahead in a series of astonishing works which indeed defined the genre for the 1970's.

First there was *Eight Songs for a Mad King* with a text by Randolph Stow, and an amazing soloist with a voice range of over five octaves, Ray Hart. Here was the extended voice with a vengeance, capable of the most extraordinary expressiveness. He could sing a chord, change it from the major to the minor, and descend in thirds. Other composers quickly scooped him up — Stockhausen and Henze first of all.

Everyone said it was a freak and a secret, not to be repeated. There now are some eight or nine performers of the work. When I took the great Cathy Berberian to Hart's studio in 1969, she was astonished, but even she had to flee clanking her throat.

Eight Songs for a Mad King caused a sensation and quickly performances followed in the major European festivals. The same happened with Davies' subsequent works, *Verbal House*, for solo dancer and solo cello and small group, and based on the anatomical drawings to accompany Andreas Vesalius' treatise on anatomy. Davies then related them to the 14 Stations of the Cross, and instead of Christ resurrecting, there appeared the Antichrist cursing the audience. At the first performance Rufina Ampenoff, Davies' publisher at Boosey and Hawkes, fell to the ground making the

sign of the Cross. The audience was visibly shaken. It was a great night. This month a second version is having its premiere in London, with choreography by Australian Ian Spink and the role of the Christ figure taken by Mark Wraith, ex-Sydney Dance Company member. Why Wraith, after the original dancer was the world's top black dancer? Because the role calls for a dancer who can play the piano, in the case of Verbal, a honky-tonk piano. Wraith is an accomplished keyboard player, who nearly decided to become a professional musician rather than a dancer.

Maxwell Davies' basic approach to Music Theatre is to build a piece around an individual usually in extremis, as it is the human condition which interests him. The famous Mrs Dosselbauer's *Mogge* illustrates this (also a text by Randolph Stow) and it had a great impact when it was premiered in Adelaide for the Festival (Anthony Storr's commission).

There is no doubt in my mind, after many years producing, directing and travelling music theatre works to the provinces as well as the major festivals of Europe, that music theatre is immensely important as a medium for interesting, even exciting audiences for contemporary music. The recent evening of two performances of *Perpetrators* presented by the Seymour Group with male solo Hartley Newbourn, proved a point. The first performance was a straight concert

recital, and the second performance, after an interval, was staged, contained and dramatically lit. Most of the audience found them to be almost two different works, and most preferred the staged version.

This is no way to designate the straight version. I am disappointed and demoralised when I go to contemporary music concerts and find myself sitting huddled with 13 others. There is nothing more chilling than the sound of 25 hands trying to create enthusiasm.

I am depressed at the "first and final performance" that so many worthy new works get. But put that same piece in a theatre set to a dance work, have the same bite, gentle and warmth applied to a real music theatre work and something else takes over. Communication. Alas, a lost word (like entertainment) in the arts. The contemporary composers to their detriment and chagrin that labour at their art and forget these two words are going to be unhappy and frustrated human beings and most likely much lesser artists.

With the world-wide swing back to sonata, is coming a more relaxed attitude with composers to the concept of communication. A decade ago most composers would have been agnostic if they were told that they were communicating to a large audience, now it has become high praise again. The composer has found it a delicious to be loved and wanted. And somewhere that is what most theatre is about.



Peter Maxwell Davies, composer, with the original "Mad King" Ray Hart and Australian producer James Murdoch at the Prague Spring Festival.

Mostly Mozart but often others

by Fred Blanks

This year begins with a bumper month for collecting Koechel numbers.

Some people prefer collecting postage stamps. Others do it with matchboxes, cigar bands or car stickers. But for musically oriented collectors, K numbers beat the lot. They remain the universally accepted system of cataloguing the music of Mozart, and though they have needed frequent revision, and are in certain respects misleading, nobody has managed to oust Koechel in supplying a framework within which Mozart's music falls neatly into place.

So who was Koechel? Born in 1806, and resident mostly in Salzburg and Vienna, he was not merely a musicologist, but a bonamus and musicologist. His magnum opus on the complete works, as then known, composed by Mozart (who had died nine years before Koechel was born) was published in 1862. Long before that, his work had earned him no modest orders and titles; he died in Vienna in 1877. A thoroughly revised edition of his Mozart catalogue was published by Alfred Einstein in 1937, and another edition with further corrections came out in 1963. But the immortality goes to Ludwig Koechel, the K numbers are his memorial. (Oddly enough, Domenico Scarlatti also has K numbers, but these stand for Ralph Kriegerstein, the American harpsichordist born in 1911.)

Musicology has proved that not all K numbers assigned by Koechel do in fact categorise Mozart works. K4, for example, belongs to a Symphony in E-flat by Karl Friedrich Abel (1724-87), and K444 belongs to the Mozart Symphony No. 37 in G Major, which is actually by Michael Haydn with only an introduction by our good friend Wolfgang Amadeus. The K180 (designated as by Bernard Fies, and K41 refers to a D Major symphony, sometimes numbered 44 (and thus well outside the accepted Mozart canon of 41 symphonies) which may be by Leopold Mozart.

But let us not wander away from the subject. Which is Mostly Mozart. That is the name and concept — borrowed from America — which dominated the first week of the Festival of Sydney. Instead of Mostly it ought to be — as one influential commentator suggested — have been Mostly, and instead of T-shirts the organisers, who were the Sydney Opera House Trust, sometimes in alliance with the



Roslyn Storchman, Leader of St Philip's Chamber Orchestra.



Australian Chamber Orchestra.

ABC) should have sold, just for a change, jeans — but even if originality was not a feature of this part of the program, there was no denying that the result was magnetic as far as attracting audience was concerned, and delightful with regard to musical results.

In 13 programs there were some 50 K numbers to be collected, and that included an all-day seminar headed by Christopher Nicholas and miscellaneous live open-air attending.

My own share of the booty consisted of three concerts — one by the augmented Australian Chamber Orchestra conducted by John Harding (a few days later they were off to Europe to prove that Australia produces musicians as well as kangaroos), one by the Sydney Virtuosi, a wind ensemble led by clarinetist Murray Kheirn, and one by Michael Dyer's St Philip's Chamber Orchestra, which pulled me socks up all the way to its T-Shirts for a program in which it chaperoned five soloists. Standards, not surprisingly, varied widely, as did program interest. The concert I enjoyed most was that of the Sydney Virtuosi, this one concentrated some more or less forgotten music by the London Bach (Johann Christian), Haydn and Mozart, if the authenticity was not above suspicion, the sound was graceful and amiable even though much of it went in and out and out the other.

If you heard a ghostly grating of teeth during that Mostly Mozart week, it would have come from Salern, when no-one had the wit to expect. But there was one definite touch in some pre-concerts located in the northern harbour bay of the Opera House Concert Hall, where students engaged in a kind of officially condoned and indeed managed hawking, strictly grain — and though the performers were mostly inferior, the idea of entertaining the audience before the main concert in this way was commendable, and another example of the friendly atmosphere which the Opera House generates — something hard to find anywhere else in the world.

After Mostly Mozart, the Festival of Sydney moved from Darling Harbour to what the Lord Mayor, personally with tongue in cheek, calls one of the finest concert halls in Australia — to wit, Sydney Town Hall. Here there was a chamber-music series in the lower, which runs about 250, and several other concerts in the Main Hall which seat 2000. Particularly encouraging in the chamber-music series were the New England Ensemble, a trio of violins Andrew Lawson, and James I was, and pianist Wendy Larrain, they played trios by Mozart, Brahms and Shostakovich with keen balance and individual merit. Also very professional was the Sydney Piano Quartet, an amalgam of players from the Sydney String Quartet and Murrumbidgee



Murray Kheirn, Sydney Virtuosi Ensemble.

Piano Trio plus a double bass, they gave solid, confident performances of Schubert's Trio and works by Beethoven and Hummel. When both these groups had to contend with was an epidemic of wrong printed program information, the standard of the Festival of Sydney in preparing programs has been atrocious. This was especially so for *An Evening in Vienna* which spelled the city of Vienna wrongly three times in two different ways, plus making many other blunders. But the most aspect of this entertainment, which attracted a full house to the Town Hall, was that the young Music Scheme Salon Orchestra, inexperienced and unaccomplished, could barely be heard above the severity and dancing, these babies-in-the-Vienna-woods could have been howling curses and plucking chickens instead of string instruments.

Several other Festival of Sydney concerts which fell to my lot deserve honorable mention.

At some of these, the Town Hall's fine Bösendorfer grand piano looked huge. Very large, indeed, in the hands of Roger

Woodward, who played all five Beethoven concertos in two concerts with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra conducted by Myer Friedman. The performances which I heard combined a feeling for stature with a degree of continuity in some details, but the overall effect was limiting. Solo pianists of a chamber-music kind also came from Boulder Goodman, who celebrated the 50th year of playing before the public in Australia with an all-Chopin recital marked by smooth and graceful playing that tended to shut concert.

A recital by the Duo Quartetto (Stanley Kecher, baroque violin, and Elizabeth Wright, harpsichord), a Haydn commemorative concert, several manifestations of the Floderman Ensemble which specializes in very recent music, a concert by soprano Rita Hunter and contralto Lauren Ellis, and a double performance of Schoenberg's *Piano Sonata* from the Seymour Group with male alto Hantley Newman, all indicated that the Festival of Sydney had treated serious music with considerable respect. And, unconspicuously, most audiences either filled the venue or came very close to doing so.

MUSIC -GUIDE

ACT

COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE, CANBERRA

The Canberra Festival will stage several musical events at this location 6-15 March. Enquiries: Canberra Festival (062) 49 1277

CANBERRA THEATRE

Eliair of Love by Donizetti (in English) 17-19 20 March. Enquiries: Canberra Opera (062) 47 0249

CANBERRA SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Kontarsky Duo 20 March. Enquiries: Musica Viva (062) 54 1097

NSW

CAPITOL THEATRE (212 3455)

Ciao Lupo, March 14, 15, 16 *Peter, Paul and Mary*, March 18, 19 20 *Joan Armatrading*, March 23, 24, 25

NEWCASTLE CIVIC CENTRE

La Nuova Compagnia di Canto Popolare, March 6
Grimethorpe Colliery Band, March 13
Enquiries: Musica Viva (049) 63 2562

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

Concert Hall: La Nuova Compagnia di Canto Popolare, March 8
Grimethorpe Colliery Band, March 11
Kontarsky Duo, March 26
Enquiries: Musica Viva (02) 29 6441

WOLLONGONG TOWN HALL

Grimethorpe Colliery Band, March 10
La Nuova Compagnia di Canto Popolare, March 12
Enquiries: Musica Viva (042) 2 9731

SEYMOUR CENTRE

Kontarsky Duo, March 22-24
Enquiries: Musica Viva (02) 29 6441

NEWCASTLE CITY HALL

Kontarsky Duo, March 23
Enquiries: Musica Viva (049) 63 2562

QLD

MORANBAH COMMUNITY CENTRE

Grimethorpe Colliery Band, March 16

DYSART CIVIC CENTRE

Grimethorpe Colliery Band, March 17

BLACKWATER CIVIC CENTRE

Grimethorpe Colliery Band, March 18

MAYNE HALL, BRISBANE

Kontarsky Duo, March 19
Enquiries: Musica Viva (07) 378 1663

SA

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL THEATRE (21 0121)

Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Adelaide Festival of the Arts
The Sydney Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Ronald Zollman, will premiere preexisting works in the ABC-Adelaide Festival/Peter Stuyvesant Cultural Foundation Competition, March 5
On March 6 the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Ronald Zollman, will present excerpts from Richard Maas's new opera *Yoss*, together with Richard Strauss's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

Igor Stravinsky Centenary Concert

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra will be conducted by Ronald Zollman
Enquiries: ABC (02) 339 0211
Music from America performed by the Australian Youth Orchestra, Music by Gershwin, Bernstein, Ives and Roy Harris, conducted by Mark Elder, March 12
Enquiries: Adelaide Festival (08) 84 0121

Percy Grainger Centenary Concert

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra will accompany a piano roll performance by Grainger of Grieg's *A Piano Concerto*. Other Grainger works also, March 18
Enquiries: ABC (02) 339 0211

Generation of Faust Barrios

Barrios' cantata will be performed by soloists Bruce Martin, John Treleven and Sarah Walker, with a Festival choir and the Australian Youth Orchestra, conducted by Mark Elder, March 26
Enquiries: Adelaide Festival (08) 84 0121

ADELAIDE TOWN HALL

The Kontarsky Duo, March 8
Enquiries: Musica Viva (08) 278 1461

ARTS COUNCIL OF SA

Touring Australian Chamber Orchestra, Grimethorpe Colliery Band and Joanne Lewis to Mt Gambier

during March

TAS

HOBART UNIVERSITY CENTRE

Kontarsky Duo, March 16
Enquiries: Musica Viva (002) 34 1602

VIC

DALLAS BROOKS HALL

Grimethorpe Colliery Band, The world's most famous brass band in its first Australian tour, March 5-9
Enquiries: Musica Viva (03) 26 5390
Kontarsky Duo, March 11
Enquiries: Musica Viva (03) 266 380

VICTORIAN ARTS CENTRE

La Nuova Compagnia di Canto Popolare, Seven singers and instrumentalists perform popular Italian music from the 12th century to the present day, March 22-23
Enquiries: Musica Viva (03) 26 5390
Kontarsky Duo, March 29
Enquiries: Musica Viva (03) 266 380

WA

PERTH CONCERT HALL

Kontarsky Duo, March 4
Enquiries: Musica Viva (09) 366 2026

Dame Joan Sutherland Recital

The celebrated soprano Dame Joan Sutherland will be accompanied by Richard Bonyng, March 9
Enquiries: Western Australian Opera Company (08) 321 5869
Free concert conducted by Dobbs Franks, March 14
A concert performance of Charles Gounod's *Faust*, March 25-27

GERALDTOWN QUEENS PARK THEATRE

Family orchestral concert, conducted by Measham, March 30
Schools orchestral concert, conducted by Measham, March 31

WA ARTS COUNCIL

Touring Grimethorpe Colliery Brass Band to country areas, March 8-13
The assistance of the Arts Information Program of the Australia Council is acknowledged in the compilation of the Music Guide

Records and collections

by John McCallum

Every year in January I get to commence about the events of the year before last, with the appearance of the *Performing Arts Year Book of Australia* (Showroom Publications, rrp \$25) and every year I seem to say the same things about the book. The latest is Volume 5, for 1980, and like those before it it is an interesting record of the year's activity and a useful reference and scholarly resource; its organisation and coverage are better than last year's, and it still has a few errors and omissions. Like every other volume except the first, the front cover is illustrated with a pleasingly modern, widely-expensive lamp of architecture — an Arts Centre, potent symbol of contemporary Australian culture.

The *Year Book* is changed this year by the addition of a Recording section and by the reorganisation of the Theatre section into companies grouped according to cultural status: "Community Theatre", "Children's Theatre" and "Significant Amateur Theatre" (all Sydney companies — is there no significant amateur theatre anywhere else?). In general it is a detailed, comprehensive, illustrated resource, and if I carp at some of the errors (modern folkies are going into the details) then that is a tribute to what we come to expect from useful publications such as this.

Attends on Helios, edited by Ian Raine (Oxfr, Second Black Box Press, rrp \$8.95), is a collection of writings on dramatic movement by actors, dancers, choreographers and critics which attempts to cover aspects of the art from ancient Greece to the present. It is very patchy, up to the 19th century (and the introductory notes to the contents don't help give much historical context) but after Debussay it picks off. It is always scoring reading good detailed descriptions of great acting, and the pieces on Pylades, Debussay, Ormrod and others alone make the book worth it. There are also four rather good case studies by 20th century greats, including Ormrod, Barnwell, Chaplin, Keaton, Lecoq and Marston. The book finishes with a very funny set-down of mine by Woody Allen, called "A Little Louder Please". Highly recommended.

Theatre in Education is one of the most important modern theatrical developments, and it has been almost totally neglected by establishment critics and historians. *Learning through theatre: Essays and casebooks on Theatre in Education*, edited by

Performing Arts Year Book of Australia 1980 Vol.5

Performing Arts



Published 1981

Vol.5

Tony Jackson (Manchester U.P.), does not exactly verify that, being written largely by practitioners and other interested parties, but it is an excellent and stimulating survey of the problems and solutions various TIE companies have faced. It has errors or omissions on the features which make TIE unique — features which worry many conventional theatre critics. TIE aims at and achieves in a way which some people think dilutes theatrical experience. Most of the work is devoted to the company which performs it, and as performed texts and live more or less capture audiences. This, along with the drive for "significant" and "relevant" material, can easily make for gross self-indulgence and sloppiness. Books such as this are vital, therefore, in presenting objective discussion and pointing to standards which can be used to distinguish good TIE from bad. More generally they can bring the truths and techniques of TIE before a wider public. The editors in this book in favour of driving your own shows and the need for constantly new, constantly important material, apply just as forcefully to adult theatre.

A less satisfactory collection of essays is contained in *The Language of Theatre Problems in the Translation and Transposition of Drama*, edited by Gertjan Habets (Penguin Press). It is a motley group of

anecdotal and scholarly articles supposedly linked by the idea of "transposing" plays from one language to another, or from one place to another or from one medium to another — a vague theme which it would take a better book than this to hold together. There are a number of specious articles on language translation of plays (five of which even bother to quote the foreign original or target language) and some general pieces (including two by Alex Bevan and Elizabeth Hovett) on problems of shifting plays around (it's as vague as that). The book is full of insights such as "Communication becomes a problem as soon as the language of a text is no longer understood." The whole notion that directing a script on stage is a kind of translation is spurious, not helped by throwing in the word "transposition".

Peter N Prince and Don Barthe's *Caroline, "A Hollering Musical based on the life of Caroline Chisholm"* (Playlab Press) will be useful for schools or amateur musical societies looking for local material with just the right amount of cliché and stereotype not to stir people up too much. It is a ludicrous romp through the life, trials and tribulations of the woman the authors mockfully call the "B lady on the Pine Island News".



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 5. **Conclusion**
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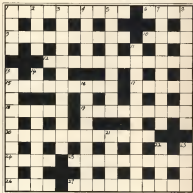
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The first correct entry drawn on March 28 will receive one year's free subscription to *Td*.

Last month's winner was S. A. Oakley, Teesdale, Old.

1. A. B. C. OF MARKETING AND ADVERTISING



- 1 Mined bag containing a savings article
→ Tantal's bag (10)
- 4 Lost confounded in the den (4)
- 9 Start of a garment? (4,4)
- 10 "We are drops and, we," (Men and
Superman) (4)
- 12 Group responsible for treatment 1
retired on in one (12)
- 15 Twice noted painade in each poetry,
(4,5)
- 17 Ten royal's female graduate (5)
- 18 One Terry used the haphs (5)
- 19 Try a stoker on a spacing, capitalised,
(4,5)
- 20 Information finds process a among
chgs with a model (12)
- 21 Bird sets many to argument (4)
- 25 Kanner may sets not set (3,5)
- 26 Satisfy with an oriental dish (4)
- 27 Writing directions to make a name, we
beat (18)

1999

- 1 "A" + any other name would result in a secret" (*Domino and Jukebox*) (4)
- 2 I have been scattered in the grass (4)
- 3 Floating loosely between by current (beat) (12)
- 4 51 and 8 add up to a ruler's wife (5)
- 5 Irretrievable quality of 18th (4)
- 6 Plentiful stretch CIA resources scribbly (10)
- 8 Norman's hanging ugly round tub to see classical plumbing (3,7)
- 13 Spurring deficient analysis, I have no returned balls (12)
- 14 Postmarks on board? (10)
- 15 Strains after underworld psychic experience not resolved (10)
- 16 Backed away from returning flames around a table (4)
- 21 Doctored with fire in the queen — he can't keep all (5)
- 22 Furry in caps, ruling out (4)
- 23 Heart beats the word man, silver (4)

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"With the derricks up above us and the solid earth below,
we're waiting at the lever for the word to let her go."

A. B. Paterson

Bungo Paterson penned these lines for a colourful poem over 80 years ago.

At that time, he could hardly have guessed that they would aptly describe the feelings of oilmen now working in a region often frequented by himself.

In an area 600 kilometres west of Rockhampton – known to geologists as the Galilee Basin – there's a tiny town called Inland.

The local pub is called "Clancy's Overflow". The over nearby – the

Barcoo – features in the well-known Bungo Paterson tale "A Bush Christening".

It's close to this town that has such strong associations with Bungo Paterson that Esso and its co-venturers are drilling the first test well in one of the largest on-shore oil exploration programs Australia has ever seen.

Together, Esso and its co-venturers expect to invest more than \$60,000,000 in the Galilee Basin on seismic studies

and a drilling programme.

As with all such exploration programs there is no guarantee of success. Oil, however, is vital to Australia's future, so the search for it – although costly – must continue.



Energy for Australia

ES/0004